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## MANAGERI EFICIENȚI PENTRU O REȚEA NATURA 2000 EFICIENTĂ – EME NATURA 2000

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# Best practices on communicating Natura 2000 sites

(Action C.8.)

## LIFE+ Information and Communication Project: Efficient Managers for Efficient Natura2000 Network (*EME Natura 2000*)

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## Criteria and model

### for best practices on communicating Natura 2000 sites

Below are some of the criteria upon which the case studies have been collected, evaluated and chosen as best practice examples:

- *Thematic offers promoted (to tour operators / to visitors / to partners...)*
- *Product-market combination*
- *Information material / Sufficient Information provided; e.g. brochures*
- *Quality and eye catching level of Info material*
- *Communication connected to promotion of local products / cultural heritage*
- *Development of communication strategy / marketing strategy*
- *Communication of values and benefits of Natura 2000*
- *Communicating on the Importance of Natura 2000 network*
- *Communicating the Economic value of the benefits provided by the Natura 2000 network*
- *Partnership/Cooperation; Communication with local communities*
- *Partnership/Cooperation; Communication with decision takers and local authorities*
- *Work with press*
- *Work with visitors*
- *Inventive and Creative use of comms*

## 1. Stakeholder dialogue in Spanish waters

### Key issue: Partnership/Cooperation; Communication with local communities

Spanish territorial waters include the southern part of the Bay of Biscay, a large proportion of the Mediterranean Sea and large parts of the Atlantic waters off south west Spain and the Canaries. With such a diverse **marine area** and **Natura 2000 sites**, which include both inshore and offshore environments the Spanish Government has a special responsibility for the conservation of migratory marine species including turtles and cetaceans.

A number of LIFE-Nature projects have been coordinated by the Spanish Cetacean Society (SEC), its branch member for the Canaries archipelago (SECAC) and the Canaries Regional Government in efforts to better protect the populations using Spanish waters.

One of them concentrated on developing marine management plans in collaboration with local stakeholders. The range of interests in the marine environment tends to be very diverse and uncoordinated, which makes this a necessarily complex and delicate process. What is more, few of the stakeholders concerned had previous experience of marine conservation issues and so were starting from a very limited information base. Any attempt to change existing practices or attitudes is therefore best accompanied by a targeted campaign to inform the stakeholders of the issues at stake and the potential impacts for them.

This was done with some considerable success along the southern coast of Spain. Previously the beneficiary – the Spanish Cetacean Society - *had identified several potential **marine Natura 2000 sites** along the narrow passage of sea that links the Mediterranean to the Atlantic. However, it recognized that, without **extensive dialogue**, the protection of these sites would meet with great resistance from local interest groups who, in the absence of any information, would feel their livelihoods unjustly threatened.*

It therefore launched a major **awareness raising campaign**, co-financed by LIFE, **to target all potential stakeholder groups along the coast**. The aim was to explain why the rich seas around Andalusia and Murcia needed protection and to engage the different interest groups in discussions over the ways to conserve these natural values whilst respecting their socio-economic needs.

Starting in 2002, three old sailing vessels travelled the length of the coast, stopping at 19 ports along the way to deliver a comprehensive series of events, talks, activities and excursions aimed at local stakeholders. The first journey was about awareness raising – informing people of the marine areas and their main threats. The second journey, a year later, took the process one step further and engaged local stakeholders in discussions over the protection of these valuable resources, especially in area of potential conflicts with existing human activities.

The final journey, which is currently underway, is seeking to reach a consensus on the draft management plans which have been prepared on the basis of the extensive consultation process. In addition to the activities related to the general information campaign, formal meetings will be held with stakeholder groups at strategic locations along the coast to take the process forward.

So far all signs are encouraging. The discussions are being held in a spirit of cooperation and constructive dialogue. The fact that everyone is now fully aware of the issues at stake, means that they can concentrate on finding practical solutions in specific areas of conflict without putting the whole concept of marine protected areas into question.

Although objections to the designations cannot be ruled out the inclusive nature of the preparatory work should help with local acceptance of potential restrictions to activities. Threats being addressed include poor fishing practice (especially harmful to turtles), illegal fishing, noise pollution and marine pollution, and where restrictions are likely, the project will encourage new economic activities, such as whale-watching.

#### **Projects references**

LIFE02NAT/E/008610

Conservation of cetaceans and turtles in Andalusia and Murcia

Spanish Cetacean Society project website: <http://www.cetaceos.com>

## 2. Finnish-Russian transboundary cooperation work increasing visibility of the Nature Protected Areas

### Key issue: Information material (brochures, booklets)

Oulanka-Paanajävi transboundary park is sharing the Finnish-Russian twin-parks cooperation model with other Nature Protected Areas: Kalevala Parks- Kalevalsky National Park, Friendship Park-Kostamus Nature Reserve and Koli National Park- Kivach Nature Reserve.

In the cross-border project Quality-CET, the protected areas are increasing their cooperation to develop eco-tourism in the Nature Reserve areas on both sides of the Finnish-Russian border. The objective of the project is to develop and promote sustainable nature and cultural oriented tourism in the nature protected areas.

On the basis of the marketing analysis of the current visibility of the parks a variety of common marketing materials was compiled. The answers to the questions: who we are? where we are? and what are the special characteristics and nature values of each area? are now collected in the same covers. The material is available in English, Russian and Finnish and will hopefully increase awareness of the ancient forests and wilderness landscapes which have been preserved on both sides of the Finnish-Russian border. The new booklet also provides tips for hiking, camping and other sustainable activities.

Metsähallitus, Natural Heritage Services, Ostrobothnia have a Lead Partner role; other partners are National Park "Paanajärvi", National Park "Kalevalsky", State Nature Reserve "Kostamykshki", State Nature Reserve "Kivach" and Senior High School of Suomussalmi.

The **Quality-CET Project** is implemented under the Karelia ENPI CBC Program and is a cross-border cooperation program for the regions of Kainuu, North Karelia and Oulu in Finland and in the republic of Karelia in Russia and ends in 2014. The key objective of the program is to increase wellbeing in the program region with cross-border cooperation.

Further information is available on the official webpage of the project. Also Paanajärvi National Park has a new website available in English.

### *Projects references*

The booklet can be found here: <http://julkaisut.metsa.fi/assets/pdf/lp/Esitteet/luontoeitunnerajoja-eng.pdf>

Official webpage of the project:

<http://www.metsa.fi/sivustot/metsa/en/Projects/NeighbourhoodProjects/QualityCET/Sivut/default.aspx>

### **3. POLPROP-NATURA – Proposals for environmental policy and governance based on demonstration of environmental, social and economic benefits for tourism in the Slitere National Park – a Natura 2000 territory**

Key issue: Communication of values and benefits of Natura 2000/ Sustainable tourism principles

#### **Background**

The World Tourism Organization has repeatedly since 1992 emphasised that nature and protected areas are a major influence on the choice of a holiday destination. In Europe, a growing number of travellers claim that the natural environment was the main motivation for their journey. The Natura 2000 network, however, is not widely recognised by tourists who are unaware of its purpose and do not always behave appropriately in its sites. As a result, natural values are threatened: the tourism industry must introduce effective strategies for development.

The need for the protection of nature values under growing tourism pressure is especially great in the Baltic countries (and in Eastern Europe as a whole) as this region develops economically. Nature and environment protection policy and implementation are comparatively new and adequate conservation measures are not always adopted.

#### **Objectives:**

The overall objective of the POLPROP-NATURA project was to demonstrate a sustainable tourism-management model for a Natura 2000 site. This model aimed to ensure the introduction and implementation of sustainability principles for achieving the development of tourism and nature conservation.

The project will create five tourism products for the area and produce a marketing strategy for each product. Furthermore, the project will develop a methodology to monitor tourism in the area. Such monitoring data will serve as a stimulus for new business initiatives, projects and support instruments to tourism.

Finally the project will also carry out a campaign to raise awareness of Natura 2000 among local stakeholders and the general public in Europe.

#### **Results:**

The POLPROP-NATURA project produced an environment and tourism policy document on sustainable tourism for biodiversity in Latvia. This proposal was based on the innovative approach to sustainable tourism taken by the project at the Slitere national park, a Natura 2000 site, and on the experience of other national parks in the Baltic region. The policy document will be used by the Latvian government as a basis for policy on tourism development in protected nature areas.

Another key outcome of the project was the development of a sustainable tourism management model of a Natura 2000 site based on five new sustainable nature tourism products and their marketing (including a Slitere national park guide, five outdoor info stands, a 'plant finder' featuring common but attractive species instead of exposing rare and sensitive species). The sustainable tourism management model also aims to save resources and improve cost-efficiency. It achieves these aims by:

- Promoting hiking, cycling and boating.
- Providing all promotional materials (touring route description sheets, the plant finder, the park tourism guide etc.) not only in print but also in electronic format.
- Developing a touring route marking method that is low on cost and simple.

- Directing visitors to less sensitive zones in the park by developing attractions and routes in areas where the environmental capacity allows for it.

The tourism management model can be used by management authorities of other Natura 2000 sites in Europe. A starter guide to developing sustainable tourism in protected areas was produced by EUROPARC Federation (which represents approximately 430 members - protected areas, governmental departments, NGO's and businesses in 35 countries). The guide contains examples of best practice in Europe. Increased awareness of Natura 2000 was achieved through a comprehensive communication campaign that included the distribution of the guide on sustainable nature-based tourism products in the 14 national parks (all Natura 2000 sites) in the Baltic countries, as well as a manual on best practices on integration of tourism and nature protection in Europe. A nature tourism in the Baltic conference attracted a wide range tourism and environmental specialists from around Europe. Overall, the project contributed greatly to the initiation of stakeholder dialogue and the exchange of experiences internationally. From a socio-economic point of view, the qualitative economic benefits were monitored in the park as a demonstration site during the project. The sustainable tourism model will continue to generate long-term economic benefits through the development and improvement of products and services, attracting visitors to the park in line with its environmental capacity. The application of the sustainable tourism model to other nature protected areas will generate economic benefits in Latvia in the long term.

Specific economic results were:

- Increase in visitor numbers and their length of stay.
- Increase in the amount of money spent by visitors – in 2011 visitors spent around 700 – 800 thousand lats in the park territory.
- High demand for the new tourism products.
- The development of new businesses and the extension of the existing ones. Tourist accommodation provides, guides (including nature guides), catering services (cafes, farms offering tasting of produce and meals on request), producers of traditional smoked fish, equipment rental companies, craftsmen, artisans all benefitted. The number of companies that offered services/products to visitors increased from 23 before the project to 48.
- The creation of new jobs.

The project also led to improved cooperation among stakeholders – interviews, regular site visits and participation in local initiative groups initiated long-term relationships. Local conflicts between the national park administration and local community regarding economic activities in the area were solved and dialogue was established.

The project activities helped raise awareness in the local community of the value of nature conservation and encouraged changes to behaviour. Businesses and other stakeholders have gained new experience, knowledge and motivation to develop environment friendly tourism practices.

#### ***Projects references***

<http://www.polprop.celotajs.lv>

[http://ec.europa.eu/environment/life/project/Projects/index.cfm?fuseaction=search.dspPage&n\\_proj\\_id=3286&docType=pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/environment/life/project/Projects/index.cfm?fuseaction=search.dspPage&n_proj_id=3286&docType=pdf)

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## 4. Be Fire Aware – an interactive tool on moorland wildfire awareness

Key issue: Quality and eye catching level of Info material

The **Be Fire Aware** project is a vital tool to communicate the risks of wildfire damage to an EU priority habitat using the scientific modelling and real time data from onsite weather stations – all in a fun, friendly and informative way.

It is a key communications output of the MoorLIFE project, a £5.5 million project funded by the European Union LIFE+ Programme to restore 2,000 acres of Peak District and South Pennine moorland by 2015.

### Location:

Delivered by the Moors for the Future Partnership – as part of the MoorLIFE project.

**The Peak District National Park** - with estimated 8.5million visitors per year - the **2nd largest National Park in the world**. Be Fire Aware is available at visitor centres at 2 key moorland gateways in the Peak District National Park – Edale and Upper Derwent, with a combined annual footfall of 81,000. Will also be distributed via national park rangers, fire services and in schools. Games will be available to download and play offline.

### Summary:

One of the biggest moorland conservation programmes in Europe, it is protecting active blanket bog (an EU Priority Habitat) by restoring bare and eroding peat – caused by industrial pollution and wildfires - in the South Pennines Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and Special Protection Area (SPA). A crucial part of this work is **raising awareness** of the importance of moorland and prevention of wildfires.

Visitors to the **Peak District National Park** can learn to 'Be Fire Aware' with new digital interactive exhibits at 2 key visitor centres.

It is a fun way of learning about the causes and effects of moorland wildfires. An explorer map, videos, photos and games teach visitors responsible behaviour on the moors.

Exhibits include:

- Moorland themed snakes and ladders game
- Fire risk pin board game
- Fire risk map generated each day using real time weather data
- Weather station on site
- Explorer map with wildfire-related content
- 6 videos on wildfire and moorland management

### Outcomes / Results:

- Games and videos to be made available for use in fire prevention work by partners including fire services, utility companies, and nature conservation organisations.
- Increasing awareness of wildfires to potential audience of 81,000 visitors per year at the point of access to moorland.
- To feature in a UK national fire prevention manual as an example of best practice.
- To be available as an online resource for use by the estimated 8.5 million visitors to the National Park per year.
- Safeguard the future of the blanket bog restoration sites within the MoorLIFE project.
- Visitors will take the awareness with them when visiting moorlands across the country and the world.

### Projects references

<http://www.moorsforthefuture.org.uk/moorlife>

### Contact details:

Debra Wilson MoorLIFE Communication Officer

# Choose an option...

Try the Fire Ranger or Fire Danger challenges and discover how you can help us prevent fire on the moors and become Fire Aware. You can find out more about our work in Fire on the Moors. Why not have a look at the Fire Risk map to see how our weather station is being used to forecast the risk of fire today.

## Fire Ranger

Welcome to Fire Ranger, your chance to explore the moors and help us fight fires.

Look out for hazards and decide what to do to make sure the moors stay a safe habitat.

One Player

Two Player

Be FIRE AWARE

Bleak and bar

Some people think of moors nothing could be further from

A previous cut-throat

## **5. A Natura 2000 management plan for the Drenthe-Friese Wold and Leggelderveld**

Key issue:

*\*Case study to be added*

## 6. Mobile apps about the species of Flora, Fauna and environments in Maremma Park

Key issue: Work with visitors/ Development of communication strategy / marketing strategy

### Summary:

The App's aim is to spread the biodiversity.

The App is shared in two parts: one is for **tourists and schools** and it permits to identify, step by step, the species of Flora or Fauna that people meet along the Park itineraries. The other part is only for **scientists** and it permits to send updated information (picture, hour and day of sighting, etc.) about species that occur inside the Park.

Visit the websites:

#### Android:

<https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.questit.parcodellamaremma>

Apple : <https://itunes.apple.com/WebObjects/MZStore.woa/wa/viewSoftware?id=623235486&mt=8>

### Outcomes / Results:

- Better knowledge of the environments
- Better knowledge of Fauna and Flora
- Entertainment, over all for students
- Improvement of scientific knowledge of Park species

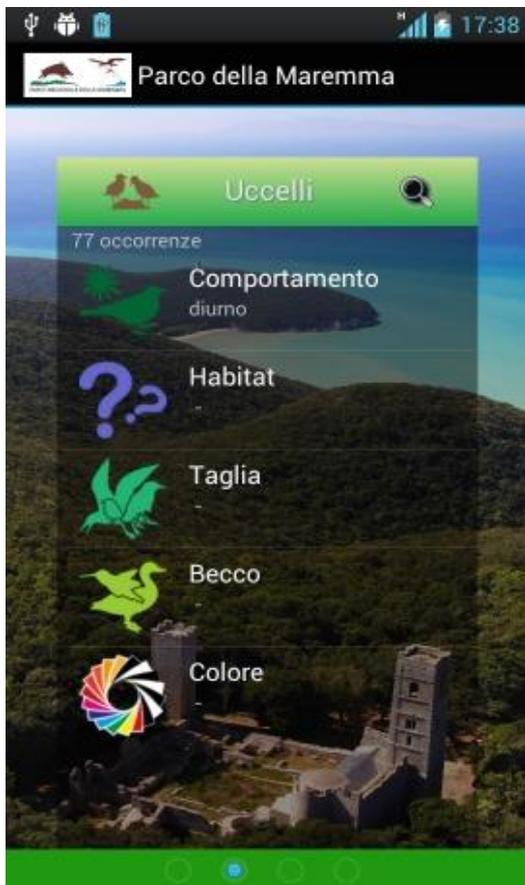
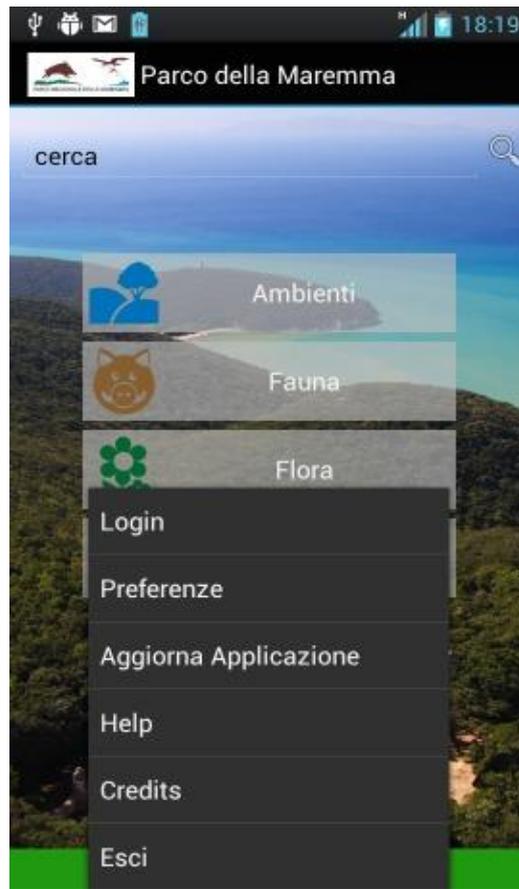
### Key messages/lessons learnt:

- The importance of multimedia communication by smart phones
- The importance for people who visit the Park to know the animals, the plants and the environments of location.
- The importance to amuse students by using multimedia channels to learn more about nature

Find attached some App screenshots

### Projects references

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## 7. PARC NATUREL REGIONAL DU PILAT, FRANCE

Key issue: Development of communication strategy/marketing strategy

Provision/development of tourism offers (special events, holiday programmes, etc.) involving the discovery and interpretation of natural and cultural heritage

**Parc Naturel Regional Du Pilat** promotes a qualification of the tourism offer of the territory and the surrounded target markets. The Park has carried out interesting work in development of the tourism offer and part III of the ECTS to promote that offer and cooperate better with Tour operators involved in sustainable tourism.

All this work is managed by the "Maison du Tourisme du Pilat", a body in charge of tourism information and commercialisation of the territory and the Charter Forum. The Park has split its main offer into 5 main themes: Hiking, Biking, Soil Products, Nature and Snow.

For each theme, "Maison du Tourisme" has defined different criteria to guarantee adapted services for the visitors. To promote these adequately, more than 60 mixed products and/or services were created, starting from half-day excursions to week long seminars and similar, for:

- Individuals and Families (free or guided)
- Groups (kids and adults)
- Meetings, seminars...

Those products/services are a great opportunity for the promotion of the businesses involved into the Part II of the ECST. To improve this method according to the Part III of the ECTS principles, the Park wants to offer a frame for any Tour Operator who wants to work with the Natural Park as a tourist destination.

In order to reach this objective, the Park is involved into an experience implemented by the IPAMAC's network (*group of 10 natural parks in Massif Central region*) and the French Park Federation.

Since February 2012, this project is trying to point out a unique method of partnership between Tourist Operators and parks. The first step of this experience is a meeting between around 20 French parks and 15 Tour operators. In October 2012, the first stage will be completed and the NP Pilat will try to adapt the method purposed for the part III of the ECTS.

### **Contact:**

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*74 87 52 01 [www.parc-naturel-pilat.fr](http://www.parc-naturel-pilat.fr)*

*[www.pilat-tourisme.fr](http://www.pilat-tourisme.fr)*

## 8. CLWYDIAN RANGE AND DEE VALLEY AONB

Key issue: Information material/ Work with visitors/ Communication connected to promotion of local products and cultural heritage

**Clwydian Range and Dee Valley AONB** shows an excellent example of bringing the landscape alive through new and exciting media. During the Iron Age, about 2500 years ago, people built and defended villages on the hilltops of the Clwydian Range and Llantysilio Mountain. These hill forts and the natural landscape of the open heather moorland are registered Scheduled Ancient Monuments and a special project - the Heather and Hillforts Land Partnership project is about raising understanding, promoting good management and greater access to this historic landscape.

The AONB through the Heather and Hillforts Landscape Partnership Scheme works with up-to-date technology to tell the story of the way people and communities have shaped the landscape over the centuries. An exciting mobile phone Wi-Fi and Bluetooth audio guide has been established on a number of bus routes around the Clwydian Range. Passengers can listen to the audio guide on their mobile phones via Bluetooth whilst travelling through the Range. Work is now taking place to develop reconstruction animation of the historic landscape that can be accessed via mobile phones and tablets.

The AONB has recently developed an Audio Visual Room at Loggerheads Country Park. This facility draws on gathers together video and audio material of the Range making it available for visitors to view. The room provides a window on the Clwydian Range for visitors to Loggerheads – the content includes a fly over the Clwydian Range and Dee Valley and extracts for old films taken in the surrounding communities in the 1950s.

Working with local communities the AONB has also continued to develop small booklets exploring the landscape of the AONB the most recent being a history of the Jubilee Tower at Moel Famau. A series of walks guides have been developed for the six hillforts of the area incorporating reconstruction drawings and other information.

The project has also re developed two of the key gateways to the Clwydian Range re-landscaping two of the car parks in order to reflect Iron Age structures. The project has taken the traditional stone shapes and structures of Iron Age Hillforts and Round houses and incorporated them into the design of the car park. This area now reflects the special landscape of the Clwydian Range and creates a sense of the historic landscape

Working with local food producers the AONB has also developed a Food Trail – linking high quality food producers of the Clwydian Range and promoting these businesses to visitors to the area. The Food Trail makes the association between a high quality landscape and high quality food production. The Trail has been extremely successful in creating a high quality brand for food producers in the Range and creating a business support network

## 9. PARQUE NACIONAL DE GARAJONAY

Key issue: Partnership/Cooperation; Communication with decision takers and local authorities

PN Garajonay is located in the centre and north of the island of La Gomera, one of the Canary Islands. The Park was certified as one of the Charter parks in 2008. The progress of ECTS in the park went through a series of implications which had a positively highly effect on the whole island of Gomera. The Park has decided to follow a Participatory Rural Appraisal approach, (*Diagnostico Rural Participativo*) comprising a set of participatory methodologies extensively used worldwide in international development contexts, aimed at an ample integration of local stakeholders on different levels (political, experts and general public) to participate actively in the process of collecting, sorting, analyzing and prioritizing information as well as in the planning and development of different projects, action plans and programmes.

The participatory process developed for the implementation of the European Charter for Sustainable Tourism in La Gomera, is based on “interactive participation”, where the stakeholders go from simple beneficiaries of the projects, to be the real protagonist of their own development.

### Level of participation implemented in CETS



The management and development of the whole process was extremely well prepared and delivered. The steps used in the methodology implied: preparation, work on field, preliminary proposal for action, evaluation and feedback and implementation.

## 10. YORKSHIRE DALES NATIONAL PARK

### Key issue: Partnership/Cooperation; Communication with decision takers and local authorities

Special Qualities, special experiences bring together the Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority's policy and principles for access, recreation, diversity, visitor management and sustainable tourism in the National Park. The strategy advocates a landscape-based spatial approach that fits people's own direct experience of the landscape and so is one that people can easily relate to. This approach connects the special qualities that people come to enjoy, and the diversity of experiences that the area offers.

Maps and summaries were produced showing the broad distributions of natural and cultural landscape features, and opportunities for access, recreation and tourism throughout the whole landscape area. Existing Landscape Character Area descriptions were fleshed out with more local level assessment of landscape types, establishing a spatial framework within which busier and quieter areas of the National Park are considered. The strategy uses simple topographic concepts that are readily understood (such as dale and moorland features), explains the sensitivities of these elements, and provides a guide to what activities or development would or would not be acceptable in each location. By using landscape as an organising principle, it is embedded in decisions rather than becoming a separated layer of constraint.

In this context the projects for green lanes and the development of the Pennine Bridleway may serve as an example of good practice on the European level. The damage to green lanes through inappropriate use by recreational motor vehicles has been monitored and traffic regulation orders have been introduced on the most damaged and sensitive routes. The effect of these is being monitored both in terms of the reduction of use and how the lanes are recovering.

The structure for tourism has changed and the tourism partnerships no longer exist. However the regional tourism organisation 'Welcome to Yorkshire' is supportive of quality and environmental good practice which is reflected in its quality charter for businesses. Business partners in the Registration Scheme are encouraged "Going Green". The partnership is very much interested in further developing this approach and awarding businesses in the framework of the Charter (Part II).

On the websites of the Park and the partnership, visitors are encouraged and motivated to take action and become "green visitors".

The Yorkshire Dales Millennium Trust continues to work with the protected areas promoting the donate to the dales visitor payback scheme which contributes to conservation work in the Dales.

A project to pilot a visitor payback scheme in one of the busiest areas of the Yorkshire Dales, '**The Three Peaks**' has been developed. This latest 'Three Peaks project' was set up to try and find a more long-term funding solution and help provide additional resources to cover the cost of managing the Three Peaks area, and establish the principle of 'user payback'. That is using money and funding in-kind, donated by users and others, to pay for the cost of routine route maintenance - as this is more than that required in other areas, thereby helping to reduce the need for large capital projects in the future. The pilot enabled the Authority to work with businesses, sell specific merchandise and work with a retail partner to assist with this, to establish corporate friends' organisation, to employ a three peaks ranger and to work with the larger charitable event providers. This pilot has provided some solutions but has also left the authority with questions and suggestions regarding how this could be improved on and rolled out into areas of the Yorkshire Dales.

## 11. Parc naturel régional de Camargue

### Key issue: Partnership/Cooperation; Communication with local communities

The Marshlands of Vigueirat see themselves as a driving force for sustainable rural development in connection with nature and ecotourism. In conjunction with the Coastal conservatory and landowners, the Marshlands of Vigueirat introduced a project on 2 vocations of their structure: Nature protection and a socio-economic dimension research with integration in the local economy by the public reception.

For the Marshlands of Vigueirat, the initial objective and priority was the protection of natural heritage. The protected natural area is accessible to anyone and devoted to nature preservation, but the access is controlled, due to the sensitivity of the biological richness and diversity. A maximum attendance of visitor cannot to be exceeded and only guided tours are allowed.

When viewed from the sky, the Marshlands of Vigueirat appear as vast mosaics of open water, marshes and reed beds. In the area surrounding, villages which are one of Arles' hamlets are placed. Most of the inhabitants are of foreign origin, mainly from Northern Africa and had been working in agriculture for years.

The Board of Marais du Vigueirat introduced in 2003 a project "*écotourisme and développement en Camargue*". The project consisted in creating a tourist attraction centre in a sector far from tourism activities; with a core objective of rural development, aiming at 50 to 100000 visitors.

The starting point of it was to involve local people and create jobs. It was important to integrate all aspects of local economic and social activities: agriculture, tourism, fishing, potential new jobs, and new social services for the inhabitants including culture.

Following many contacts through a forum and working groups with the inhabitants, the complete project (worth 2.6 million of Euros) was obtained in 2006 from the European funding (Life promesse, 30%), central government, regional and other public funding and support of WWF and Gaz de France (Gas utility company). The whole project was based on eco efficiency: solar energy, recycling of waste and rainwater, reduction of water needs, use of local wood for heating, etc. In addition *Marshlands of Vigueirat* site was awarded with an EMAS certification.

The project went through 3 phases:

- **feasibility** ; Aim – to show the wealth of fauna and flora on 150 hectares at the north
- **Life PROMESSE**; Aim- to reduce the impact of existing human activities and the future ones on the site, in the context of responsible tourism.
- **sustainable tourism with local population**; Aim - directly involve the local population, to revive the local economy, and deal with the pressures of tourism in the urban area of Mas-Thibert

## 12. Blog Escaparcs in Provence Alpes Côte d'Azur (PACA)

### Key issue: Development of communication strategy/marketing strategy

Since 2008, the Park of the Camargue is engaged in a process of implementation of the principles of the European Charter for Sustainable Tourism (ECST) on its territory and with local stakeholders. Therefore it is taking part in the collective approach "Inter-Parks," which includes five Regional Nature Parks (NRP) of the Provence Alpes Côte d'Azur (Alpilles, Camargue, Provence, and Queyras Verdon) supported by the Regional Council, who have joined together to pool their resources, support professionals in eco-friendly practices and enhance the appeal to visitors.

A partnership was initiated in 2011 between Parks and the Regional Tourist Board (CRT) of the PACA to start a **blog** dedicated to responsible tourism. ([www.mesescaparcs.fr](http://www.mesescaparcs.fr)) The blog was first introduced in April 2012, and it comes in the form of a travelogue of a journalist, Helen, who participates in the discovery of responsible and sustainable tourism in the five Regional natural parks of PACA.

The blog is very interactive containing many photos and video reports. All the topics introduced, chosen by the NRP and ARC highlight the diversity and richness of regional tourism: visit exceptional sites, welcoming the public in an organic farm in the Camargue, Natural Heritage, the local knowledge and portraits of tourism professionals involved.

This blog promotes the collective dynamic Inter-Parks that has been created around sustainable tourism, through the ECST and support professionals in a progressive approach. This very popular communication tool contributes to the promotion of sustainable tourism of the whole region because:

- It gives visibility to tourism values, authentic and quality available to visitors;
- It encourages tourism professionals to enter the eco-friendly steps that can lead them to get a label, like the brand "Regional Park";
- It gives clarity to the action of PACA Parks in sustainable tourism.

## 13. Loch Lomond & The Trossachs National Park

### Key issue: Partnership/Cooperation; Communication with decision takers and local authorities

The first Park Plan 2007- 2012 was closely aligned to the Framework and Action Plan for Sustainable Tourism. There was a midterm review of the Park Plan and a second Plan 2012-2017 has now been approved. At the midterm review the opportunity was taken to assess performance and refresh some of the actions in the Park Plan. A key lesson learned was that to achieve cooperative engagement from partners' actions, that need to be articulated and priorities expressed more succinctly. This was achieved without compromising the sustainability principles.

The second Park Plan, (renamed the *National Park Partnership Plan* to emphasize the need for joint delivery) further refines priorities and focuses activity. In a period of general slow economic growth and reducing public sector funding the Plan highlights the potential for the Park to be a generator of growth in Scotland while protecting a world renowned environment. The report *Valuing the Park* supports this and details the contribution to the Scottish economy including the value of the Park's ecosystems. The new plan gives the strategic direction. More detailed objectives and actions are contained in the emerging Sustainable Tourism Strategy, Outdoor Recreation Plan and other supporting plans such as the Biodiversity Plan.

### The Loch Lomond & The Trossachs National Park Community Futures programme and community partnership

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The community futures programme enabled communities to develop and implement their own action plans with support from the NPA in terms of capacity building and with projects. A significant development has been the increasing role of the Community Partnership. Funded partly by the NPA they now have an annual formal Partnership agreement with the authority and deliver support to communities directly. This has enabled them to take a lead role in supporting communities to renew Community Action Plans in a more sustainable way. The Park maintains a direct involvement with communities through the Rural Development directorate and with direct help on specific community led projects. The Community Partnership has directors appointed from the communities of the Park.

Highlights have been communities producing their action plans with six Communities currently published or working towards their second action plans. The plans have helped communities to draw in thousands of pounds into the park to deliver projects, some examples being the award winning Bracklinn Bridge, Gartmore- Buchlyvie cycle track, Arrochar new Three Villages Community Hall, Community run Garage in Aberfoyle, Community Playparks and Heritage Facilities. The Community Partnership is leading on community projects of a park wide nature such as the Apprenticeship Support Scheme, Paths in the Park and Community Futures Goes Green.

### Steering group

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The NPA works with many partners at all levels from CEO to operational officers. A number of mechanisms have developed to facilitate this and to enable agreement on priorities and to ensure delivery, examples being the regular meeting of chief officers from local government and other agencies to ensure acceptance of the NP sustainability principles are embedded in the actions of partner organisations, the Community Partnership mentioned above giving a voice to the communities of the park and partnership working with environmental partners agencies such as Scottish Natural Heritage and Forestry Commission. The Destination National Park Group (drawn from key tourism businesses) contributes to the policies for sustainable development of tourism and contributes greatly to the fulfillment of the actions. Latterly the group have decided to constitute themselves more formally as a not for profit company in order to access funding streams not available to the Park Authority and to take an industry leadership role in developing sustainable tourism. Engagement also continues with local area tourism associations and groups around the park.

## 14. PN the Volcans d'Auvergne

### Key issue: Information material/Thematic offers promoted

Since 2009 the IPAMAC – the association involving 10 regional parks across six regions in the centre of France – has started to build partnerships with tour operators interested in promoting sustainable tourism. A first agreement was made with the association ATR [www.tourisme-responsable.org](http://www.tourisme-responsable.org) to:

- further develop the tourism economy of the parks, offering to tourists new travel experiences in the region
- promote a sustainable and harmonised development of the region
- further develop public-private partnerships, working with travel agencies that share the values of protected areas
- help tourism professionals, and agencies members of ATR, to be more visible and to further develop quality offers oriented to strong human and environmental values.

Starting from that positive experience, also the Regional Park of Volcans d'Auvergne has established a direct partnership agreement with a local tour operator: Chamina Voyages [www.chamina-voyages.com](http://www.chamina-voyages.com), which is also member of ATR.

Through the agreement, the park authorised Chamina Voyage to sell tour and itineraries in the park area bearing the Park partnership label. In order to get the park label, those itineraries must first be approved by the park, which has the right to evaluate the general organisation of the tour, the selection of accommodations and the itineraries proposed.

In 2012 Chamina Voyages is commercialising 18 trails or tours within the Volcans d'Auvergne Regional Park, some offered just with a leaflet for excursionists, others with a professional guide. 11 of those tours have been developed in partnership with the Park, and looking at 2011 this would mean about 600 tourists and about 3100 nights spent in the park area.

Since 2012 the partnership with Chamina Voyages has been reinforced mainly to give a more structured offer for tourists choosing the non-guide tours.

The park hopes that this experience can contribute to the definition of the methodology for the Charter part III: working with Tour Operators.

## 15. Verdon Regional Natural Park

### Key issue: Partnership/Cooperation; Communication with local communities/ Work with visitors

“Écogardes” (similar to rangers) have various tasks, essential for PNRV: During off-season they travel all over the park, checking sensitive locations and footpaths. During the summer season they are more numerous and more present on sites with risk of fire, and on hot spots along the lake banks. They organise patrols together with staff members of EDF, national forestry management, participate in tourism enquiries, thus contributing to an accurate image of visitors profile. “Écogardes” were formed in 2002 as a need to protect the park that came from the local stakeholders. PN Verdon is visited by great number of people, especially in the summer months, which cause a great damage to the park if not being cautious with the behavior. Inappropriate behavior of the visitors especially on lake banks when setting up camping places, hiking without proper equipment lead to an initiative from the park to inform and create public awareness of the number and fragility of local species in the park. “Écogardes” stepped up here as a great communication tool, educating the public on various topics, from weather, schedules in the park, scientific results, guiding and helping the visitors to get around. At the same time since being constantly on the field, they experience from the first hand and keep track on park condition, implementing monitoring protocols daily of attendance and behavior, particularly ensuring that the special attention is always put on hiking trails and other pathways in the nesting periods. Every year, the passing lanes near the nests are identified and informative posters are installed in the relay or at the top of the tracks.

Based on the idea that we respect what we know best, education is one of the essential engines of heritage protection. It is the heart of the action of eco-guards. The objective of this action is to play on human emotions and by transferring the message influence the “sensitized” people keeping in mind that the personal protective instinct is the highest. Awareness is here conceived as knowledge, not as background knowledge. It is a means of disseminating information to promote its public ownership.

By encouraging people to discover the territory in other seasons, they are trying to redistribute the number of visitors per year. They contribute to the development of another image of Verdon and take in account the local actors who are involved in sustainable development.

Today, Verdon ecoguards develop their relationship with the inhabitants of the territory by supporting the mission of the Park as part of territorial animation (participatory scientific inventories, and taken care of contacts, relays).

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## 16. Woodland – Water – Wilderness – a LIFE project for the restoration and optimization of Natura 2000 sites in the Eifel National Park, North Rhine-Westphalia / Germany +

### Key issue: Communication of values and benefits of Natura 2000

While so much of the countryside in this part of Germany is farmed or otherwise changed by other human activities, three protected areas of woodland and water habitats are being allowed to revert to natural wilderness. These areas, sites of community importance according to the European Habitats Directive, are located almost entirely in the *National Park Eifel*, southwest of the Cologne in Germany.

"To let nature be nature" is the motto of the national park. And it is also the motto of the LIFE+ project. The long-term goal of the National Park is to permanently conserve near-natural habitats for native fauna and flora, free of ongoing human management. Experts call it "process conservation", when e.g. a part of a forest is completely left to itself. However, before that can happen, it is necessary to remove remnants of human land utilization that will affect the reversion process.

The three project areas are part of the NATURA 2000 transnational network of areas specially protected for wildlife. The network stretches throughout the European Union. The NATURA designation, plus the protection given by the National Park declaration, provides a platform on which true wilderness conditions can be re-established in the Eifel. Before human activities disturbed the natural dynamic balance of the area, it was characterized by natural forest and freshwater habitats. In reversing the changes made by man, the project will re-establish large, undisturbed areas of natural forest and freshwater habitats. This enables various rare and threatened species of wildlife to build up stable populations of long duration.

A website and a complete set of **communication strategies** have been created in order to help the audience uncover some fascinating facts about the wildlife within the National Park and the complex inter-dependencies and relationships between various woodland and water species. The communication work is mostly directed to the broader public, the visitors of the National Park and the National Park gate, but also the National Park schools, multipliers like forest guides and interest groups in the region.

Please find below the **communication resources**:

The video about the project can now be seen on youtube: <http://youtu.be/hXe9OhMfA-s>

Website: <http://www.wald-wasser-wildnis.de/en/>

Flyer: <http://www.wald-wasser-wildnis.de/de/oeffentlichkeitsarbeit/>

Explaining ongoing activities for visitors: <http://www.wald-wasser-wildnis.de/de/oeffentlichkeitsarbeit/was-ist-hier-los/>

Traveling exhibition containing seven posters: <http://www.wald-wasser-wildnis.de/en/> (*You will wander until the end of the project period through the Eifel region. If you want to borrow it, you are welcome to register at the Biological Station Aachen region.*)

#### **Contact:**

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LIFE+ Projekt „Wald – Wasser – Wildnis“

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## 17. The biodiversity of Natura 2000 Upper Tisa and Ronisoara Forest is a great unknown - Romania

Key issue: Partnership/Cooperation; Communication with local communities

This site in Romania covers 11 local authorities and takes in several multicultural and multi-ethnic communities on the border with Ukraine. Relations with local people have not always been cordial, due mostly to misunderstandings about the need for *biodiversity protection*. Many objected, for example, to “someone coming here and forbidding us to work on our land!” Others worried that “if current economic activities are prohibited, will we have to leave the country to become beggars in other countries?”

For these reasons, the association decided to launch an *information and awareness-raising campaign* targeted at different segments of the local community: economic agents, farmers, forest owners, parent associations, schools and local authorities. Debates, meetings and discussions were then held to understand the importance of *biodiversity conservation* and improve knowledge on the contribution of protected areas to local economies. Local education institutions have been important partners; there is also a group of “young ambassadors of Upper Tisa”.

Resources:

<http://www.heidenroslein.home.ro/hprezentare.html>

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## 18. Natura 2000: Walks to discover the most beautiful sites of Wallonie – Belgium

Key issue: Communication connected to promotion of local sites

This project aims to *raise public awareness of Natura 2000* in Wallonia, Belgium. Although several Natura 2000 sites are now covered, the first was the 'Fagne de Malchamps et de Stoumont' (BE33032A0 and BE33032B0), with its peatbogs, dry and wet heaths and grasslands. '*Discovery cards*' were used to inform hikers of the importance of this European ecological network, and also to increase appreciation of the wide biological diversity to be found in Wallonia.

*Texts and pictures* illustrate different species and habitats to be found in Natura 2000 sites, bringing to light the importance of the network and the necessity of protecting and managing these sites effectively. In 2013, some *12 820 Discovery cards for about 21 different walks were distributed*. Transferable to all Natura 2000 sites in the EU, this original and innovative concept has the potential to be adapted and improved. The cards can be used to highlight the positive impact of Natura 2000, and the habitats that have been restored by LIFE projects co-financed by Europe.

### Resources:

<http://www.sitytour.com/joomla/www/index.php/rando?randotype=detail&idrando=181499>

<http://www.berinzenne.be/FR/acceuil.htm>

## 19. « Enjoy Snowdonia App »

Key issue : Inventive and Creative use of comms

‘**Enjoy Snowdonia**’ is the perfect mobile guide to enjoy, explore and discover the **Snowdonia National Park** - one of Britain’s Breathing Spaces and greatest treasures!

Developed by the Snowdonia National Park Authority, this app will be your greatest companion to get the most out of your visit to Snowdonia National Park, from lovely scenic walks to adrenalin-packed activities to memorable attractions. The app is the perfect tool to find out about things to do in the National Park, whether you are local to Snowdonia, a visitor or looking for a family day out. As a visitor, you can use the app prior to your visit to Snowdonia to plan great days out across the National Park and enhance your visitor experience.

### **Content:**

- Directions and maps for walking in the National Park, including mountain walks, leisure walks and accessible trails
- Information on various activities such as cycling and mountain biking, water activities, horse riding, climbing, golf clubs, leisure centres and more
- Information on attractions, historical sites, heritage railways
- General information on Tourist Information Centres, public transport and hospitals
- Links to our social media platforms

Special Feature:

If you’re a Welsh speaker or would like to learn a bit of Welsh, make the most of this fully bilingual English-Welsh app.

### **Additional Features:**

- Map based navigation
- Ordnance Survey maps for walks
- Google maps with satellite views of all walks, activities and attractions’ locations
- Utilises your mobile’s GPS for finding things to do near you

Feedback:

We would love to hear your views on our app so please send us feedback and suggestions on how we can improve it.

email: [parc@eryri-npa.gov.uk](mailto:parc@eryri-npa.gov.uk)

### **Projects references:**

<http://www.eryri-npa.gov.uk/visiting/local-information/app>

[Download Android App](#)

[Download iPhone App](#)

[http://www.eryri-npa.gov.uk/\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0011/161687/Nat-Cons-and-Biodiversity-SPG-Final-pdf.pdf](http://www.eryri-npa.gov.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0011/161687/Nat-Cons-and-Biodiversity-SPG-Final-pdf.pdf)

## 20. The LIFE Oroklini project

### Key issue : Communication of values and benefits of Natura 2000

Primary school education packs that detail the importance of Oroklini Lake have been unveiled as part of the EU funded LIFE project '**Restoration and Management of Oroklini Lake Special Protection Area**', which is in its final year (2014).

The packs - titled '**Education material for Oroklini Lake**' - were prepared by members of Frederick University Conservation Unit in collaboration with the Cyprus Pedagogical Institute and the LIFE Oroklini project partners. They were presented to school teachers during a workshop earlier in April at the Voroklini Community Council building, where educators were guided on how to use the education pack, whilst the Minister of Education and Culture - Costas Kadis - also attended the workshop and gave a talk on Biodiversity and its significance for the island.

Designed to **raise awareness** on the importance of Oroklini Lake, as well as other conservation issues, the education packs include:

- a story,
- games
- worksheets and are aimed at primary children aged six to 12.

The content of the packs is linked with the Curriculum of Environmental Education for Sustainable Development, which officially applies in primary education and can also be applied in natural environments like Oroklini Lake.

**Melpo Apostolidou - LIFE Oroklini Project Coordinator**- says of the initiative:

"Oroklini Lake can act as an open classroom, not only for children but for adults as well and spring is an ideal season to experience the site."

During the unveiling of the packs, the President of the Voroklini Community Council, **Chrysostomos Parpounas** said: "This education pack is one of the most important awareness raising actions on the significance of Oroklini Lake as it can also be combined with site visits where the public can use the infrastructure created as part of the project. We invite all the schools of Cyprus to visit Oroklini Lake for a living learning experience!"

The three-year, EU-funded LIFE project began in 2012 and is due to end in December 2014. It is aimed at protecting this significant wetland and raising awareness of its value for biodiversity, both on a Cyprus and a pan-European level, as one of only seven natural wetlands in Cyprus.

The lake is a Special Protection Area (SPA) under the EU Birds Directive, and a Site of Community Importance (SCI) under the EU Habitats Directive.

In total 190 bird species have been recorded at the site, but it is especially important for two bird species, the black-winged stilt *Himantopus himantopus* (which favours the lake as its nesting site above any other area on the island), and the spur-winged plover *Vanellus spinosus* that nest there.

Cyprus holds more than 50% of the EU's breeding population of the spur-winged plover and on a local scale; Oroklini Lake is one of the top five areas in Cyprus for the reproduction of this species.

Other migratory birds include herons, flamingos and glossy ibis, as well as the pelican, which is a rare sight at the lake for only a handful of days on its way to Africa.

There have been a number of initiatives during the project's duration, such as a **volunteer-based clean-up of the lake** - which was particularly prone to illegally dumped waste, a **photographic exhibition** that showcased the landscape and wildlife of the lake throughout the year, and a 16-minute documentary titled 'Oroklini Lake - A Wetland of Pan-European Ecological Importance'.

An information kiosk was opened in February 2014, and an Information Kiosk Officer was installed there in March. Earlier this month, the bird watch spot was also opened

#### **Projects references:**

[www.orokliniproject.org](http://www.orokliniproject.org)

[www.youtube.com/watch?v=mrMUrTwqY4](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mrMUrTwqY4)

## 21. Let's Clean the Paiva River

### Key issue : Communication of values and benefits of Natura 2000

The project consists in **two** main parts:

- Investigation of pollution points in the Paiva river through field research and recording of evidence on polluting discharges into the river.

- Awareness of municipality authorities and local population for the problems that affect the water quality of the Paiva River and to the riverbank's preservation of this site of Community importance of the Natura 2000 network, through meetings with local authorities, refuse collection in the banks of the Paiva river , with public participation and awareness campaigns for the consequences of polluting discharges and riparian vegetation cuts and accumulated garbage in the areas of recreation / leisure, in the biodiversity of the Paiva River, among the municipalities, schools and through social networks.

**Location :** Vale do Rio Paiva (Municipalities of Castelo de Paiva, Cinfães, Arouca, Castro Daire, S. Pedro do Sul, Viseu, Vila Nova de Paiva, Sernancelhe, Sátão and Moimenta da Beira)

The initial goal was to investigate the origin of the incidental pollutant discharges in the Paiva river, with a view to removing and awareness of local authorities and the general public of the importance of the Natura 2000 network and the need to reconcile sustainably tourism, respecting the Sector Plan of Natura 2000 network for this site. Since 2010, several problems, mainly the malfunction of several stations Wastewater Treatment, in the municipalities of Castro Daire and Vila Nova de Paiva, where pollutant's discharges into the river and / or its tributaries were identified.

Through contact with the Municipalities responsible for such equipment, and the denunciation of the most serious situations to the competent national authorities, it was possible to improve significantly the operation of some of these equipments, which resulted in an improvement in water quality over the past three years. The S.O.S. Rio Paiva has also been following various tourist projects on Paiva's riverbanks, warning for the importance of sustainable tourism that respects the Sector Plan of the Natura 2000 network.

### Outcomes / Results

- Identification of various wastewater treatment plant discharging pollutants into the Paiva River
- Mobilization of local authorities in the elimination of points of pollution
- Mobilization of the community in reporting points of pollution
- Collection of 500 kg of garbage on the banks of the Paiva River in 2013
- Cancellation of illegal buildings on the banks of the Paiva River

The campaign "**Let's Clear the Paiva River**" arose from the need to alert and raise awareness of the importance of the classification of the Paiva river as a Site of Community importance of the Natura 2000 network, due to lack of information and ignorance of local authorities to the importance of Natura Network and the preservation of Paiva's River biodiversity, at a time when many tourism projects were projected on the river banks. This campaign has allowed some projects that were being undertaken, have regard to the Sector Plan of Natura Network, having been introduced changes in the initial plans in order to minimize the impact of the building's constructions. The campaign is primarily targeted to Municipalities of Paiva's River basin, but also to the student population (Secondary Education) and general population.

To achieve our objectives, meetings were held with municipal councils, information sessions in schools and auditoriums, field actions (walking routes and field trips) and information through the association's website and social networks (Facebook, Twitter and Youtube) .

### Projects references:

[www.riopaiva.org](http://www.riopaiva.org)

[www.riopaiva.org/natura2000paq](http://www.riopaiva.org/natura2000paq)

[www.riopaiva.org/vamoslimparoriopaiva](http://www.riopaiva.org/vamoslimparoriopaiva)

[www.riopaiva.org/noticias/meia-tonelada-de-lixo-retirado-das-margens-do-paiva](http://www.riopaiva.org/noticias/meia-tonelada-de-lixo-retirado-das-margens-do-paiva)

<https://www.facebook.com/riopaiva>

<https://twitter.com/SOSRioPaiva>