

The Health & Nature Program

Health and therapeutic itineraries

Forest ecosystem services for human health
Research and practice from Southern Europe
EUROPARC WEBINAR

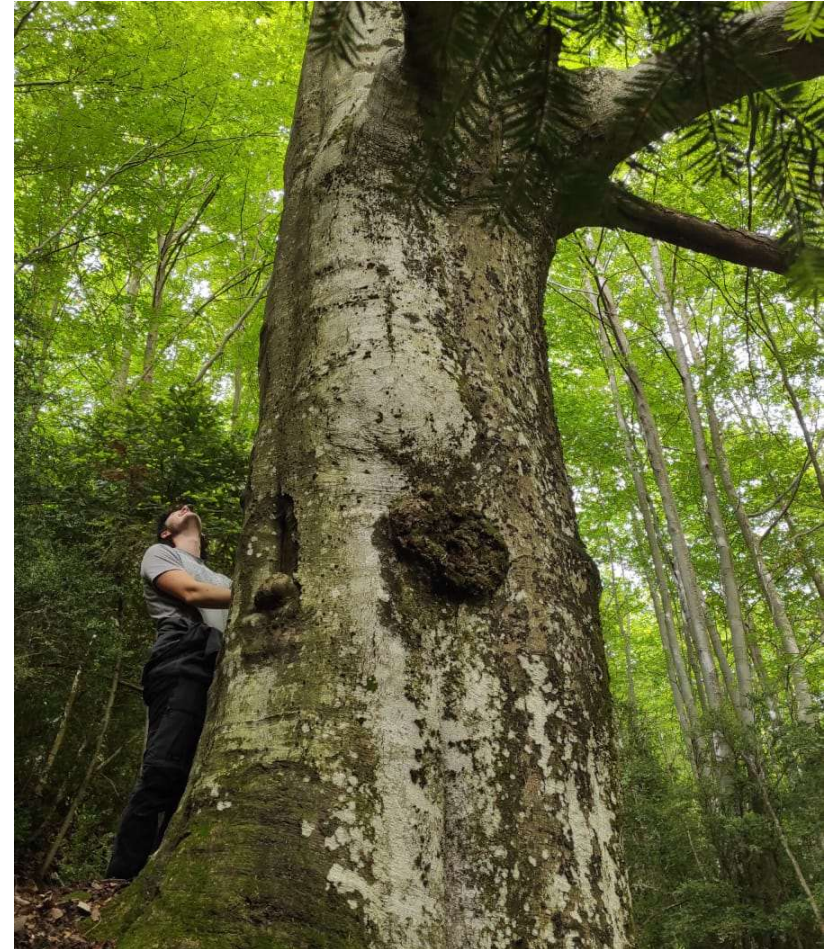
3rd December 2024



**Generalitat
de Catalunya**

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1. Introduction
2. Antecedents
3. Our case studies



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Introduction



Living Planet Index

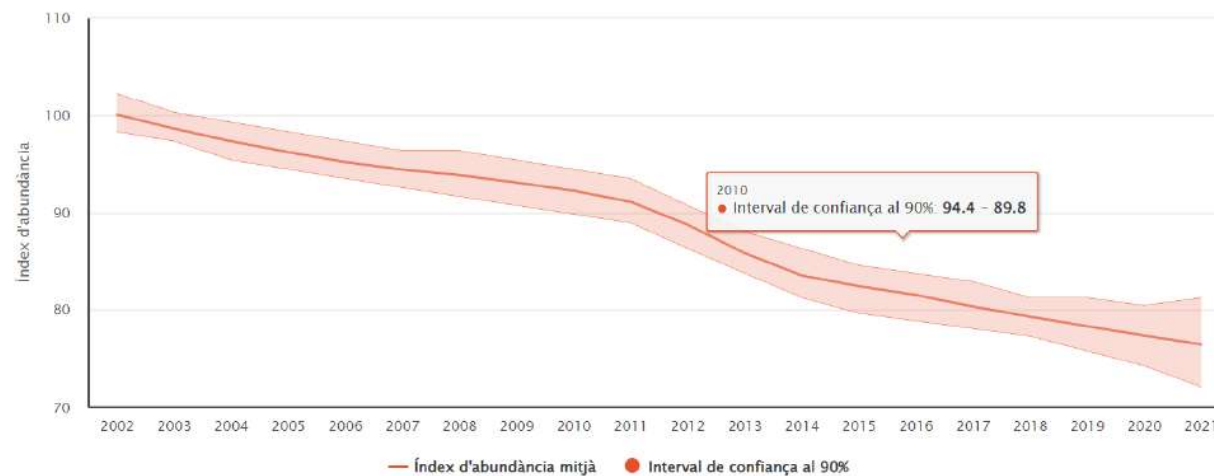


CATALUNYA

▼ Descens -24%



OBSERVATORI DEL PATRIMONI
NATURAL I LA BIODIVERSITAT



Dades obertes a la societat sota llicència de Creative Commons (CC BY-NC-SA)

The System of Natural Protected Areas of Catalonia

Protected Natural Areas

184

Nombre d'espais del PEIN

1.112.134,82

Total superfície del PEIN (terrestre + marí), en hectàrees

1.026.497,72

Superfície del PEIN en l'àmbit terrestre (en hectàrees)*

85.637,10

Superfície del PEIN en l'àmbit marí (en hectàrees)*

Natural Park's network and other Natural Areas of Special Protection

106

Nombre espais ENPE*

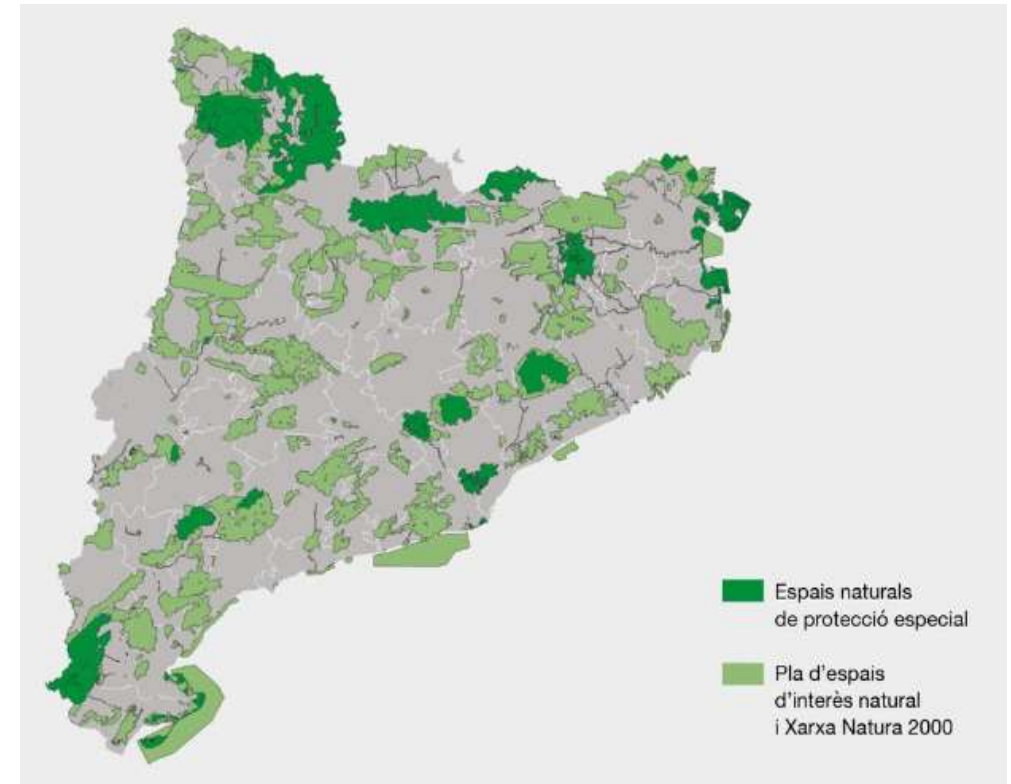
331.539,09

Àmbit terrestre***

5.420,84

Àmbit marí***

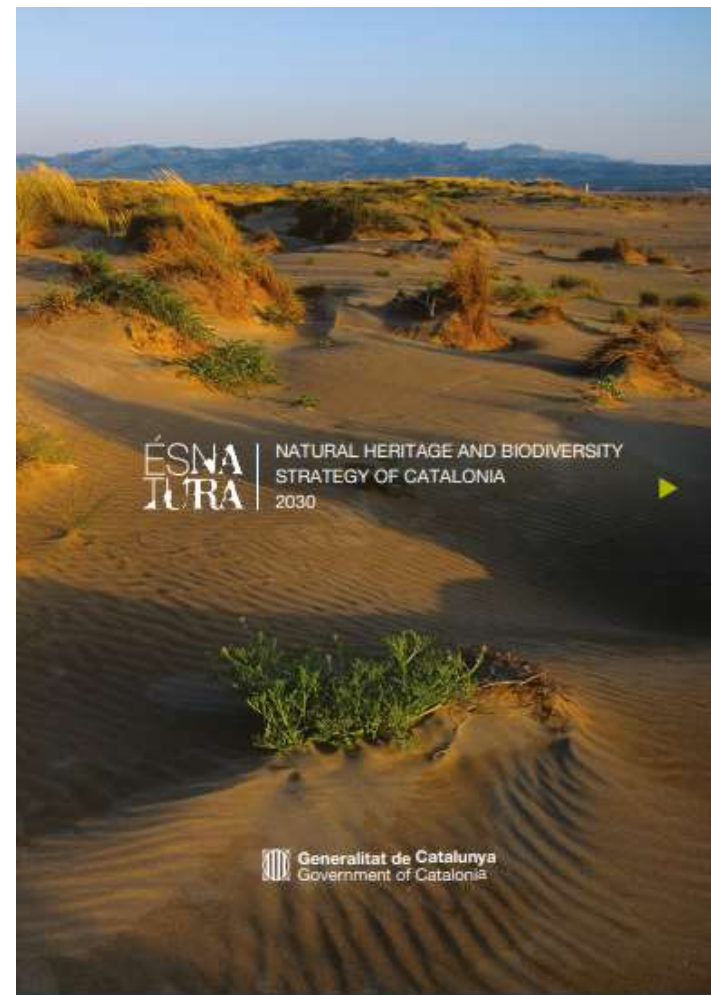
(***) Sumatori de tots els ENPE sense duplicar superfícies que presenten més d'un ENPE



Protected Areas Statistics

2

Antecedents



Antecedents

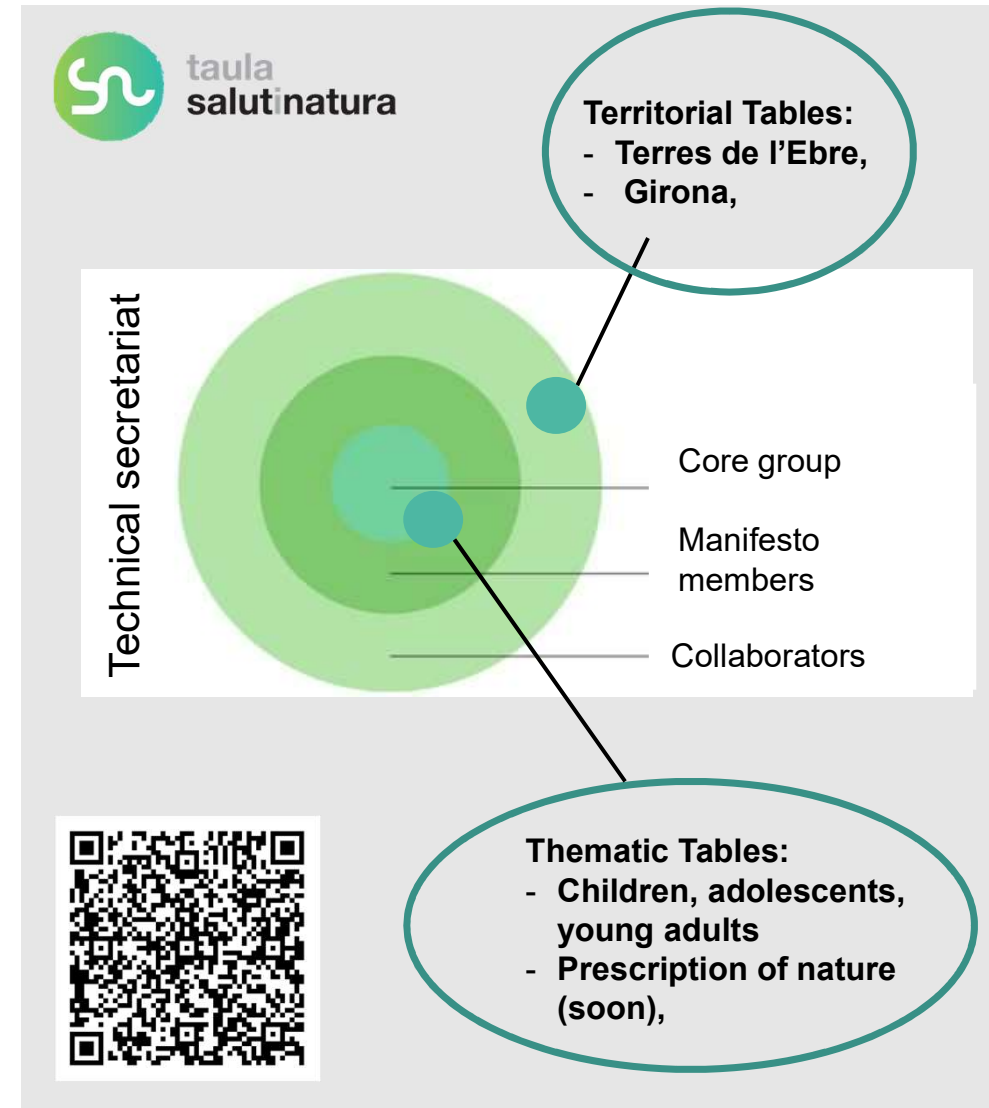
Starting from the bottom

- Consolidated network of environmental and social associations
- Health and Nature Seminar 2019, XCN
- Pioneering local initiatives:
 - Research at Hospital de Girona
 - Primary care center of Castellà del Vallès
 - Garrotxa Pediatric Environmental Health Unit
 - SELVANS Association
 - Other regional Administrations: Diputació de Barcelona
 -



Health and nature Board

- **Declaration on the interdependence between health and nature in Catalonia**, January 2019
- **Health and nature board:**
 - Sensitisation: Web page, newsletter,
 - Facilitate actions and networking
 - 174 org (+18) and 264 people (+51): 9/9/24
- **Core Group:** administration (Generalitat, others, Health, Nature), civil society, research, economy
 - Annual Action Plan
 - Organising Annual meeting: 2023, 2024,
- **Smaller tables activated in 2024:** some have a geographical focus, others thematic



Initiatives of Health Centers



Research projects



Duration: 2021-2025, Horizon 2020

Testing and evaluating **nature-based social prescription** in various cities in Europe, Latin America and Australia. Especially addresses **loneliness in urban contexts** prov. from Bcn UVic, UB, UAB, ISGlobal, ASPACAT

<https://www.recetasproject.eu/>

Duration: 2024-2027. Horizon 2020 + UK IR

Integrated Multiscalar Approach to **Expanding Nature-Based Therapies to Improve Equity in Mental Health**
UOC + UAB

<https://greenme-project.eu/>

Duration 01/06/2023 - 01/06/2027. UK's Horizon 2020+ RI

ISGlobal will carry out a study to link people **with metabolic syndrome to a therapy based on nature in two coastal areas of Barcelona and Badalona.**

<https://resonate-horizon.eu/>

Applied projects at municipal level



LA VORA DE GIRONA. PROJECTE MARC

📍 GIRONA, CATALUNYA

INFRASTRUCTURA (VERDA)

PROJECTES TERRITORIALS



Promotes biodiversity and ecological infrastructure as backbones transforming the city of **Girona** into a **greener, more resilient and healthier one**

<https://web.girona.cat/gironat>

It aims to bring nature closer to citizens by **offering them green and blue spaces for well-being, health, sport and the enjoyment of the landscape.**

<https://web.girona.cat/sostenibilitat/lavora>

Natural Heritage and Biodiversity Strategy of Catalonia, 2030 ÉsNatura,

Sacaling up

Main guidelines are based on six key thematic area



AREA 1. Knowledge, information and monitoring of the natural heritage

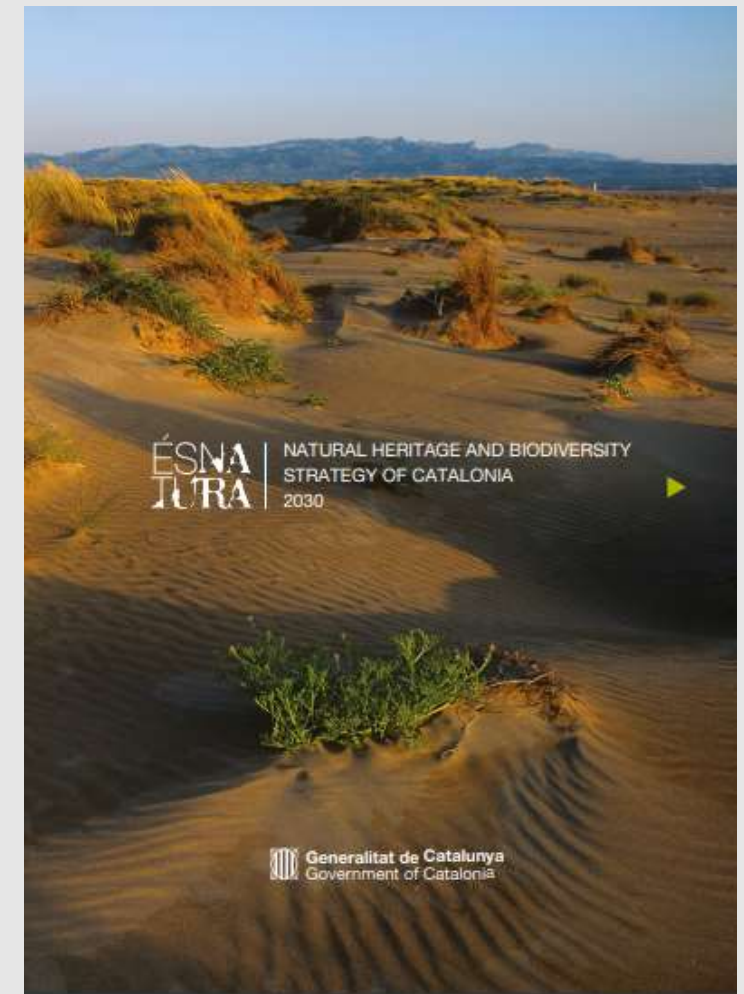
AREA 2. Conservation of the components of natural heritage in the context of global change

AREA 3. The territorial model

AREA 4. Integration of natural heritage in sectoral policies

AREA 5. Administrative organisation, legal framework and taxation

AREA 6. Society engagement in the conservation of natural heritage



Health and Nature Program included in 2023-26 2nd Action Plan

Area 6: Society engagement in the conservation of natural heritage

Operational objective 6.1.1: Raise social awareness of the impact of human activities on the services provided by nature.

AL. 63

Integrate the benefits of nature for people's health and well-being in conservation policies, and in the set of sectoral policies

AL. 64

Design and implement the governance of the Health and Nature program



Healthy Parks
Healthy People
EUROPE

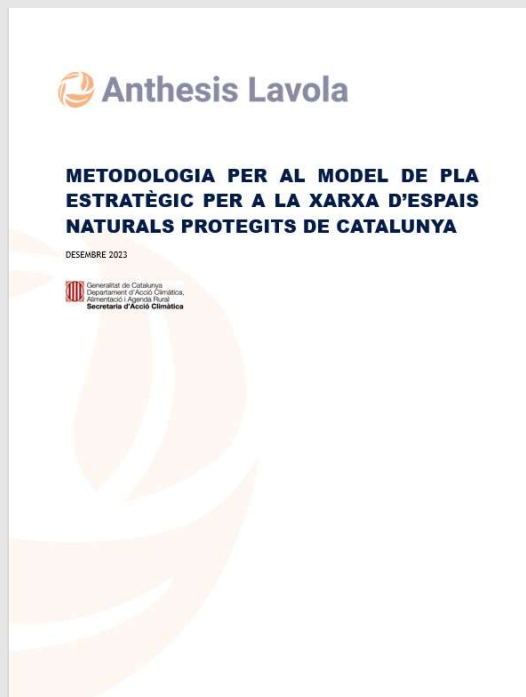


AL 63 TARGETS	2023	2024	2025	2026	Es Natura
Develop the Health and Nature conceptual framework		X			63A
Design the 2023-2026 Health and Nature Programme	X				63A
Design a seminar on Planetary Health at the EAPC		X			63B
Conduct a seminar on Planetary Health at the EAPC		X			63B
Organize a course on health and nature at the DTER			X		63B
Incorporate the importance and interdependence of health and nature into the upcoming 2024 "Equilibri Natural" campaign		X	X		63B
Develop a web page on health and nature		X			63B
Prepare a catalogue of health and nature initiatives in natural protected areas			X		63B
Integrate health and nature initiatives into the environmental education and volunteering programmes of ENPEs			X		63B
Deploy actions to promote and spread the interdependence of health and nature			X		63B
Establish criteria for the design and implementation of a network of healthy paths in the ENPEs		X			63C
Implement two healthy routes in the ENPEs network		X			63C
Implement new healthy routes in the ENPEs network			X		63C
Incorporate Health and Nature into the Strategic Plans of the ENPEs			X		63C
Deploy Health and Nature initiatives aimed at specific groups in the network of healthy routes (health personnel, elderly people, young people, mental illnesses etc.)				X	63C
Facilitate pilot research projects on health and nature in the ENPEs		X	X	X	63C
Incorporate the health and nature axis into the CETS Action Plans or in their renewal		X	X	X	63C

Other Programs structured transversally by Health and Nature Program

Natural Parks and Consortium Strategic Plans

Environmental Education and Volunteering Strategic Plan of protected areas network



← **AXIS: education, volunteering and communication**

← **STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 13.8:**
Deploy and adapt the Health and Nature program

AREA 3: Transversal Actions

TR-1: Integrate the benefits of contact with nature for people's health and well-being into environmental volunteering and education programs

**PLA ESTRATÈGIC
D'EDUCACIÓ I VOLUNTARIAT
AMBIENTAL DE LA XARXA D'ESPAIS
NATURALS PROTEGITS DE
CATALUNYA 2030**



Juny 2024


Generalitat de Catalunya
Departament d'Acció Climàtica,
Alimentació i Agenda Rural

AL 64 TARGETS	2023	2024	2025	2026	Es Natura
Create the bilateral commission between the Dept. of Health and Dept. of Territory, Housing and Ecological Transition		X			64A
Sign a collaboration agreement between the Dept. of Health and Dept. of Territory, Housing and Ecological Transition		X			64A
Develop and deploy a joint Work Plan. carry out dissemination campaigns, carry out training, promote specific projects		X	X	X	64A
Have an updated map of health and nature assets			X		64A
Hold the annual meetings of the members of 1st, 2nd, 3 rd or 4th Tables	X	X	X	X	64B
Carry out and implement the annual dissemination actions of the Health and Nature Table	X	X	X	X	64B
Carry out actions to promote the prescription of nature		X			64B
Increase the scope of the Health and Nature Table with the addition of new members			X		64B
Assess the degree of implementation of the nature prescription				X	64B
Approve the 2027 Action Plan				X	64B
Define the common articulation of the territorial health and nature tables	X				64C
Establish the Territorial Health and Nature Table in Terres de l'Ebre		X			64C
Facilitate and deploy the roadmap of the Territorial Health and Nature Table in Terres de l'Ebre		X			64C
Establish the Territorial Health and Nature Table in Girona		X			64C
Facilitate and deploy the roadmap of the Territorial Health and Nature Table in Girona		X			64C
Propose a health and nature and youth work line (SCEA)		X			64C
Involve the Natural Parks and/or Territorial Services in the Territorial Tables and/or thematic working groups		X	X	X	64C

Collaboration Agreement with the Health Department

Department of Territory, Housing and Ecological Transition

- Commissioner for the Integral Commuter Transit
- Commissioner for the promotion of urban, environmental and social improvement in neighborhoods and towns
- + Cabinet of the Minister of Territory, Housing and Ecological Transition
- + General Secretariat of Territory, Housing and Ecological Transition
- + Secretary of Mobility and Infrastructures
- + Secretary of Territory, Urbanism and Urban Agenda
- + Secretary of Housing
- + Secretary of Ecological Transition

Department of Health

- + Cabinet of the Minister of Health
- + Secretary General
- + Secretary of Health Care and Participation
- + Secretary of Public Health
- + General Directorate of Health Planning and Research
- + General Directorate of Health Strategy, Diffusion and Communication
- Health Quality and Assessment Agency of Catalonia (AQuAS)
- + Catalan Health Service (CatSalut)

Collaboration Agreement with the Health Department



Guia breu per a la inscripció d'activitats o recursos

 Descarregar PDF



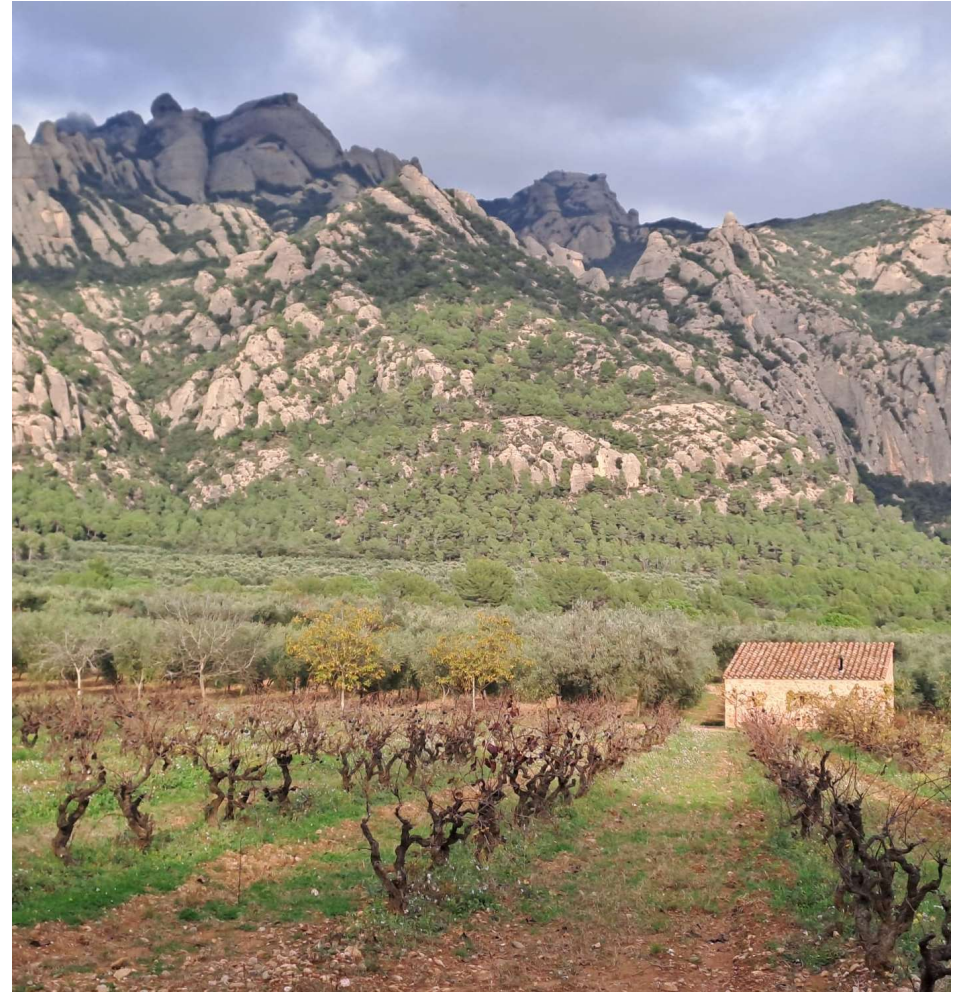
HEALTH ASSET FINDER

3

Our case studies

Implementation activities on the ground:

- Network of healthy paths in Natural Parks
- Training and capacity building

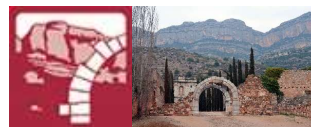


Network of healthy paths in Natural Parks

Examples of existing Natural Parcs initiatives



Multi-capacity
activities and routes



Spiritual values and
intangible heritage



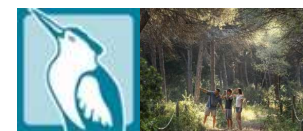
Mindful walks
Forest therapy



European Charter
for Sustainable
Tourism



Blue recipe and
research



Sensorial activities

<https://parcsnaturals.gencat.cat/ca/xarxa-de-parcs/fitxes-dels-parcs/>

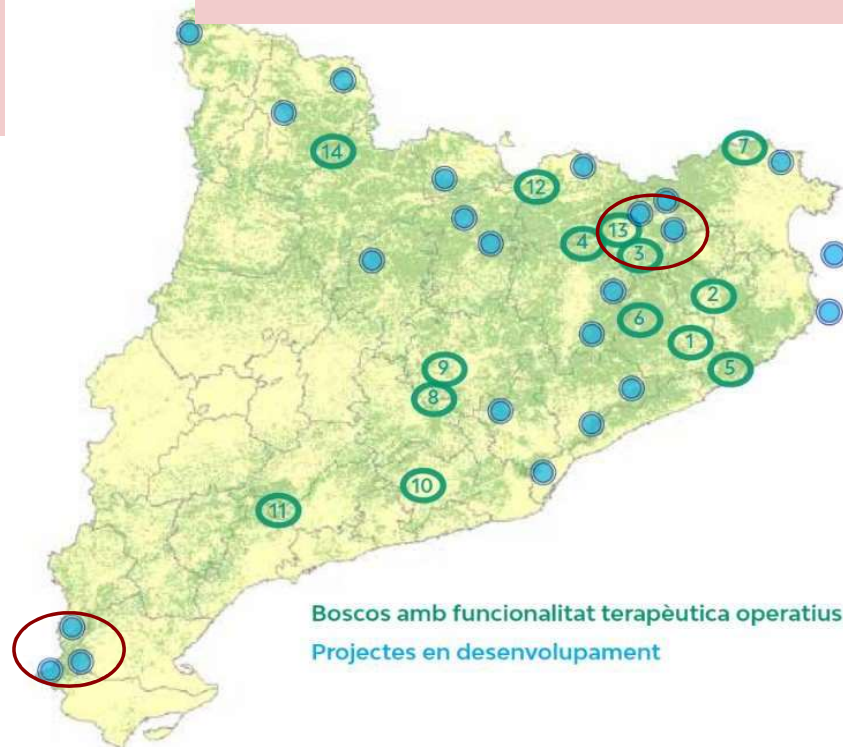
Network of healthy paths in Natural Parks

SELVANS

<https://selvans.org/>

- Conservation / land stewardship
- Health
- Training
- Research

SELVANS Quality standard for forests with therapeutic functionality

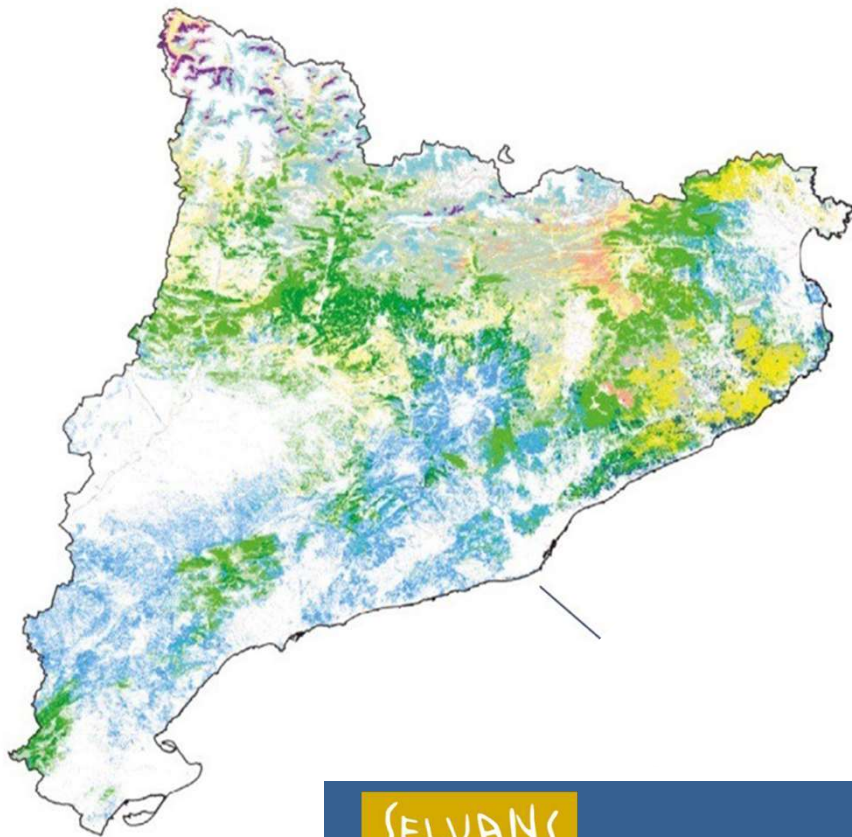


- Quality of the forest: maturity of the forest, ecological complexity, harmony
- Land stewardship
- Itinerary and facilities: Accessibility of the place, Quiet environment
- Specialized guides
- Local stakeholders
- Cooperation with hospitals and biomedical research programs

SELVANS

Mediterranean forests in Catalonia

High diversity in forest ecosystem types,, but not only forests



SELVANS

Frondoses / Frondosas / Broad-leafed

- **Surera** (*Quercus suber*)
- **Alzina** (*Quercus ilex*)
- **Roures** (*Quercus caducifolis*)
- **Faig** (*Fagus sylvatica*)
- **Altres espècies**

Coníferes / Coníferas / Conifers

- **Pi Blanc** (*Pinus halepensis*)
- **Pi pinyer** (*Pinus pinea*)
- **Pinassa** (*Pinus nigra*)
- **Pi roig** (*Pinus sylvestris*)
- **Avet** (*Abies alba*)
- **Pi negre** (*Pinus uncinata*)

Network of healthy paths in Natural Parks

Healthy paths vs forests paths with therapeutic function: PARAMETERS

Parameters	Healthy itineraries (IS)	Therapeutic forest itineraries (IFT)
Distance	Maximum 10 Km	Maximum 3 Km
Difficulty	Medium - low	Low
Elevation	There may be unevenness in very specific sections	There may be unevenness in very specific sections
Maximum slope	50% punctually	- - -
Approximate duration	2-5 hours	2-3 hours
Related services	Nature guides, mindful walks...	Forest baths, mindful walks, forest therapy...
Predominant ecosystem	Various ecosystems / forest / mosaic	Mature forest (at least 70%)
Spaces characteristics	Diversity of spaces, environments and landscapes (forestry, views, meadows...)	Diversity of spaces within the forest ecosystem, shadows, open spaces
Activities	Can be guided or not	Guided or preferably guided

SELVANS

Network of healthy paths in Natural Parks

Healthy paths vs forests paths with therapeutic function: VALUES

Healthy itineraries

Main Item: Trail
Sense of orientation
Socialization
Abreadth of view
Physical fitness
Knowledge of the environment
Fascination
Management when walking
Observation
Landscape

Therapeutic forest itineraries

Main Item: Forest
Sense of connection
Silence
Isolation
Sensory fitness
Integration in the environment
Mystery, Pace
Slowness
Contemplation
Biodiversity

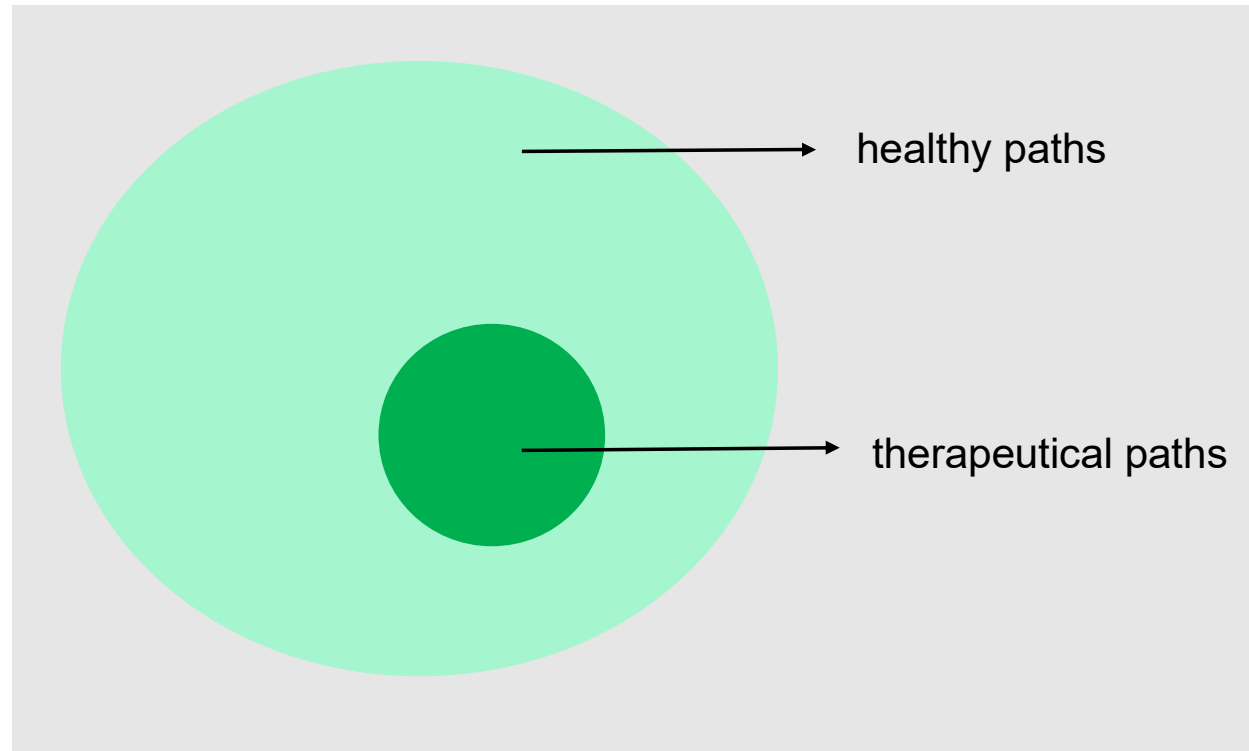
..... And SHARED values

SELVANS

Network of healthy paths in Natural Parks

Integrating “therapeutical paths” and implementing healthy paths: CHALLENGES

- Collaborative approach and sustainable governance
- Comprehensive management
- Criteria for an approach and proposals for its panning, implementation and management



Training and capacity building

- **Parks staff:** General training in Nature and Health in 2025
- **Specific courses:** “Good connoisseur of the Park”. A new module on health and nature
- **Environmental Education Associations:** Guide to promote the combination of health and nature in childhood, adolescence and youth. Dec. 2024
- **Civil servants and public staff:** Planetary Health Seminar in Apr. 2024, EAPC
- **Academia**



[Guia-salut-i-natura-2024/](#)



[Seminari Salut Planetaria](#)

Training and capacity building

Nature and Health guide

- Proposal for levels of intervention in nature.

FIGURA 2: Nivells d'intervenció en Salut i Natura.



Font: Irene Cervera i Montse Masó, 2024.



[Guia-salut-i-natura-2024/](#)



Generalitat de Catalunya



Generalitat de Catalunya
**Departament de Territori, Habitatge
i Transició Ecològica**

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