



LIFE Project Number  
**<LIFE17 ESC/PT/003>**

**Progress Report<sup>1</sup>**  
**Covering the project activities from 31/03/2019<sup>2</sup> to 31/03/2020**

Reporting Date<sup>3</sup>  
**31/05/2020**

LIFE PROJECT NAME or Acronym  
**LIFE VOLUNTEER ESCAPES**

Data Project

<b>Project location:</b>	Portugal
<b>Project start date:</b>	01/01/2018
<b>Project end date:</b>	31/12/2020
<b>Total budget:</b>	1751902,00€
<b>EU contribution:</b>	1139115,00€
<b>(%) of eligible costs:</b>	

Data Beneficiary

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<sup>1</sup> Progress Report without any payment request (for Progress Reports with payment request, use the Mid-term Report template)

<sup>2</sup> Project start date in the case of the first Progress Report, otherwise date since the last reporting period

<sup>3</sup> Include the reporting date as foreseen in part C2 of Annex II of the Grant Agreement

**Notes:**

**According to Article II.23 of the General Conditions “Technical and Financial Reporting – Requests for payment and supporting documents”, the coordinating beneficiary must provide the EASME with:**

**- a progress report whenever the period between consecutive reports exceeds 18 months.**

The **progress report** shall contain the **necessary information for the EASME to evaluate the state of implementation of the project**, the respect of the work plan, the financial situation of the project and whether the project's objectives have been achieved or are still achievable.

- Progress reports ***must*** be submitted following the timetable *as foreseen in the final version of the proposal attached to the Grant Agreement (i.e. part C2 of Annex II)*, unless modified with agreement of the EASME.
- Please follow the reporting instructions concerning your technical report and deliverables that are described in the document “Guidance on how to report on your LIFE 2014-2020 project”, available on the LIFE website at: [http://ec.europa.eu/environment/life/toolkit/pmtools/life2014\\_2020/documents/how\\_to\\_report\\_on\\_your\\_lifeproject.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/environment/life/toolkit/pmtools/life2014_2020/documents/how_to_report_on_your_lifeproject.pdf). Please check if you have the latest version of the guidance as it is regularly updated. Further guidance per section is given within this template.
- A progress report should normally contain a maximum of 15 pages, excluding deliverables. Please note that this suggested number of pages is indicative. In exceptional cases, the number of pages may be higher to provide the required information as described below and in the guidance per section. Please use font Times New Roman 12 or equivalent.
- Progress reports must be accompanied by the deliverables due in the reporting period as well as other relevant annexes (such as feasibility studies, networking reports, maps, all technical and financial documentation requested by the EASME in previous letters, etc.).
- The internal co-operation agreement between the beneficiaries (referred to in Article II.1.1(c) of the General Conditions) shall be annexed to the first progress report only.

## **REQUIRED STRUCTURE:**

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## 2. List of key-words and abbreviations (when appropriate)

### Abbreviations

2 PR – Second Progress Report

APA-ARHAlgarve – Agência Portuguesa do Ambiente – Administração da Região Hidrográfica da Região do Algarve

ASSOL – Associação de Solidariedade Social de Lafões

BCSD Portugal – Conselho Empresarial para o Desenvolvimento Sustentável de Portugal

CEV – Centro Europeu de Voluntariado

CPV – Confederação Portuguesa do Voluntariado

CNPV – Conselho Nacional para a Promoção do Voluntariado

CASES – Cooperativa António Sérgio para a Economia Social

EC – European Commission

ESC – European Solidarity Corps

ELIP - Interpretation Centre of Lagoa Pequena

IAS – Invasive Alien Species

ICNF – Instituto de Conservação da Natureza e Florestas

ICNF-PNSC – Instituto de Conservação da Natureza e das Florestas – Parque Natural de Sinta-Cascais

ISPA- Instituto Universitário de Ciências Psicológicas Social e da Vida

MARCA ADL – MARCA Associação de Desenvolvimento Local

MONTIS – MONTIS Associação de Conservação da Natureza

MTV – Município de Torres Vedras

P1A – Plantar uma Árvore

PASS – Placement Administration and Support System Platform

PCP – Project Coordination Team

Play Solutions – Playsolutions – Audiovisuais, Unip, Lda

PSML – Parques de Sintra – Monte da Lua

RRN – Rede Rural Nacional

RV – Rota Vicentina – Associação para a promoção do turismo de natureza na Costa Alentejana e Vicentina

SIC – Sociedade Independente de Comunicação, SA

SPEA – Sociedade Portuguesa para o Estudo das Aves

VO.U – Associação de Voluntariado Universitário

### Key-words:

Biodiversity

Conservation

Invasive Alien Species

Nature

Portugal

Volunteering

## 3. Executive summary (max 2 pages)

### 3.1. General progress

In general, the project is delayed against what it was foreseen in the application regarding the reception of volunteers and some Actions under section B. These actions are B.3 Production and Deployment of TV Series for Dissemination, Replication and Transfer, due to the delays in the filming of the series episodes and B.4 Networking with other LIFE projects/teams due to the delay foreseen in receiving different LIFE

projects. Most of the *deliverables* and *milestones* foreseen for 2018, and 2019 for all actions have been achieved. The objectives regarding conservation works and engagement of communities and entities related to Action A.4 to A.11 are developing well; most of their progress indicators are close to be achieved and several have already been exceeded.

Despite the delays shown, since the last report it was possible to readjust the difficulties encountered on receiving volunteers and it is foreseen the overcome of the delays for 2020, specially for Actions B.3 and A.3 to A.11. However, due to the COVID-19 situation, the partnership is feeling constraints in achieving the expected in the application within the project-time.

### 3.2. Assessment as to whether the project objectives and work plan are still viable

The reception of the volunteers foreseen in the application seems to be the only indicator that will not be viable to be achieved by all the beneficiaries. To overcome this delay aggravated by the global pandemic, the beneficiaries have not discarded the possibility of enlarging the duration of their Actions A.4 to A.11, inside the project-time (December 2020), welcoming more volunteers and continuing the conservation works.

Despite that the receiving of volunteers foreseen in the application is expected to not be achieved within the project-time, the main purpose of the project: testing the use of ESC volunteers for nature conservation, seems to be viable and progressing well. The project is allowing the disclosure of several important lessons on how to deal with volunteers for long periods of time and keep them integrated in nature conservation.

The volunteers have been increasing the management conservation works, either with direct work or by stimulating/ promoting activities with the beneficiaries, helping also as monitors. In addition, the work between the beneficiaries has allowed to optimise the complementary goals of each association, for example the joint volunteering actions between Plantar uma Árvore, MONTIS and MARCA

The COVID-19 situation is already affecting significantly the recovery of the delays occurred in 2019, namely the reception of volunteers, developing activities, and filming the TV series. However, after discussing between the partnership, some measures are being taken to overcome this constraint and globally, with some changes and delays, the working plan for the project is still ongoing and most of the beneficiaries are close to achieve the completion of their action progress indicators, with several indicators already exceeded.

### 3.3. Identified deviations, problems and corrective actions taken in the period

The lack of information provided by ESC regarding the partnership with our LIFE project in ESC projects guidelines for volunteers and the malfunction of the PASS platform continues to be one of the main difficulties found to the success and smooth run of the project regarding the receiving of volunteers.

Since mid-summer 2019, the PASS platform has stopped displaying the public offers sent by the beneficiaries to share the project and recruit volunteers. Despite the efforts of reporting the issues and notifications to the competent entities, the problem has not been solved so far and has created a big impact on the project main objective: recruitment of volunteers for nature conservation using the European Solidarity Corps platform, delaying

mostly the beneficiaries that have a higher number of volunteers foreseen in the application. The beneficiaries have been forced to seek and recruit volunteer using alternative methods, such as social media, digital adverting, national volunteer's data bases, municipalities, universities, direct contact in PASS platform, which is very time consuming and not very effective (for 100 direct contacts - 3 interested volunteers or less), and others.

Another issue related to ESC that seems to be affecting the recruitment of volunteers is the lack of information regarding the LIFE+ESC partnership in the European Solidarity Corps guidelines for projects that are accessible to all potential volunteers. Some volunteers have approached the project with several questions regarding how the LIFE VOLUNTEER ESCAPES runs and if they need the same requirements as in a traditional ESC project, which for these volunteers would impose an impossibility to participate.

Despite the difficulties the partnership has been able to recruit volunteers during the elapsing of the project having achieved so far, the reception of 54% of the volunteering days for the regular volunteers foreseen and 19% of volunteering days for the joint volunteers foreseen. Recently, the coordinating beneficiary has been able to display public offers in PASS platform by opening older public offers that were already closed.

The TV-Series foreseen under Action B.3, is delayed. Six and half episodes from the 12 foreseen in the application have been filmed, from which 3 have been produced and the remaining are in production. The delay in the action until 2020 was mainly due to difficulties in scheduling the recording of the episodes, because of a low number of volunteers, weather conditions, cancelled activities, etc. (more detailed constraints can be found under Action B.3). The EC has requested on the last letter related to the mid-term report a proof that the series will be broadcasted by SIC until the end of the project, however this confirmation cannot be given before the complete production of the series as stated in the project application. Despite this constraint, the beneficiary PlaySolutions will restart the contact with SIC after the complete production of 6 episodes (foreseen for mid-2020) to encourage the approval of the broadcasting

Yet, the filming of the remaining 5 and half episodes, foreseen to be completed in the first trimester of 2020, was delayed due to the COVID-19 situation, as the scheduled activities for the episodes, reception of volunteers and even displacement of personnel outside their home country was cancelled and restricted. The TV-series filming is expected to restart as soon as the confinement measures end and the beneficiaries' activities are back to normal (around July 2020).

In order to achieve the foreseen in the application regarding the reception of volunteers, and due to the impacts caused by the restrictions of the state of emergency, the beneficiaries have expressed their wish to extend their project actions (Action A.4 to A.11) within the project time-frame (December 2020). This extension would allow the beneficiaries that expect to not achieve the number of volunteers foreseen in the application or that would be interested in receiving more volunteers, to continue welcoming volunteers and progressing with the conservation tasks.

It is also important to highlight that due to the COVID-19, most beneficiaries have felt a significant impact due to the safety measures taken, namely on the reception of new volunteers (in P1A case for example) or on completing the *deliverables* due to the postponing of activities (for example in the case of BCSD which has awareness-raising sessions that depend on the participants).

For this extension the beneficiaries will need some adjustments to the budget foreseen, in order to increase the number of volunteers received. This matter will be detailed under section 6 “Financial Part” of the present report.

#### 4. Administrative part

For this period of reporting there were some significant changings in personnel in some beneficiaries. MONTIS headboard changed on January 2020, being the new president Mr. Pedro Jorge Portela de Oliveira replacing Mr. Henrique Pereira dos Santos.

The Project Manager of the coordinator beneficiary MONTIS has left the project in September 2019. The Assistant to Project Manager has been promoted to Project Manager being the person with more knowledge of the project. One ESC volunteer in MONTIS has been hired, after his volunteering period, to the Assistant position for good performance has a volunteer. The general and personnel costs have not increased because the new Project Manager has the same daily rate than the previous one and the new assistant has a lower daily rate than the previous.

On January 2020, the staff person reported to be allocated half time to the project on the mid-term report to allow the reception of more volunteers, left the association. A new person was hired for the position.

In SPEA the main changes were in 2019 at the Azores site: it was foreseen one Project Technician under the role “Training and follow-up of the volunteers at SPEA Pico da Vara/Ribeira do Guilherme”. However, in order to ensure an adequate follow-up of the volunteers, and considering that the budget allowed it, between April and June 2020, SPEA enlarged the staff allocated to the project at the Azores site up to two people, in order to prepare all the materials for the welcoming and training of the volunteers. This new staff person left the project in July. For the Berlengas site, in August, the person hired for the position of “Administrative support and content production” has left the project due to her involvement in other new projects. At the end of the year, the staff person “Conservation Officer” for the Azores site also have left the project. For 2020 - due to the changes in 2019, SPEA will allocate more time to the Project coordinator at SPEA, from 55% to 61% approximately, and another member of the staff will be added to support the follow-up and training of the volunteers in SPEA Lagoa Pequena. These changes will not impose an increase of the budget under “Personnel”.

APA ARH-Algarve was reported previously with having difficulties regarding the procedure of staff hiring, that are now overcome and Carlos Mendes has officially signed a contract on October 2019. In December 2019, the Division Chief Paula Noronha was replaced by Pedro Coelho that was allocated to the project. However, during February 2020, Pedro Coelho has left the project as Division Chief in APA-ARH Algarve and the position is yet to be filled.

The Project Manager in BCSD has left the project on January 2020, and a new person was hired for the position. MTV has also reported changes in staff in 2020: the project coordinator in the Municipality (Sandra Pedro) ceased the contract on the 1<sup>st</sup> of January, as well as one of the project technicians (Margarida Frade), who ended the contract on the 15<sup>th</sup> of January. Nevertheless, these changes will not compromise the foreseen actions.

The project is being managed by the coordinating beneficiary MONTIS. Monthly meetings are being held with all the beneficiaries to discuss decisions and follow up the

running of the project at each partner. The meetings are being interspersed between presential (in one of the beneficiary's sites) and Skype meetings. The presential meetings have allowed the gathering of the volunteers from different partners, to experience the conservation work done in different sites and share experiences with other project volunteers. It has also allowed the coordinator beneficiary and associated beneficiaries to have a better insight of the project progress at other beneficiaries. The project management information has been managed with the support of a virtual cloud where all the documents are uploaded and organized to facilitate the consulting of the financial and administrative information of all the beneficiaries.

The communication with the external team from NEEMO is very regular on e-mail and phone basis, and the partnership meets in person with the monitor yearly.

Since the beginning of the project, the VOLUNTEER ESCAPES has seen two amendments to the Grant Agreement as explained on the last mid-term report.

## 5. Technical part

### 5.1. Progress per action

#### **A.1 Co-Definition of Joint Volunteering Program and Preparation of Individual Volunteering Plans**

State: on going

Foreseen start date: 01/01/2018

Actual start date: 01/01/2018

Foreseen end date: 30/06/2018

Actual (or anticipated) end date: 31/12/2020

The action has suffered changes regarding the preparation of the Individual Volunteering Plan (IVP) and is running as expected regarding the joint volunteering programme.

The Individual Volunteering Plans of the volunteers as already explained in previous reports are being prepared alongside the welcoming of each volunteer. The *deliverable* "Individual Volunteering Plans" and the *milestone* "Approval and Public Deployment of all Individual Volunteering Plans concluded" foreseen to be completed in the 30/06/2018 will therefore be delayed until the welcoming of the last volunteer.

The IVPs and Volunteer Agreements produced until March 2020 can be found in Annex III – "Deliverables of the Project".

The *milestone* "Approval and Public Deployment of the first package of Individual Volunteering Plans" foreseen in the application for the 31/03/2018 was achieved in the beginning of October with the welcoming of the thirtieth volunteer.

Until the end of March 2020, the partnership received 129 ESC volunteers, which concludes a total of 136 IVPs and 130 Volunteer Agreements produced. The number of volunteers received and the IVPs produced will show a discrepancy because the partnership has decided that each joint-volunteer would have the same number of IVPs as the number of Associations that the volunteer would be engaged to, for example, a joint-volunteer between MONTIS and P1A would have two IVPs' parts, the first one corresponding to MONTIS (the first association to receive the volunteer) and the second part corresponding to P1A (the second association to receive the volunteer). This method allows a better perception of the tasks and skills acquired by the volunteer in each association. Because some of the volunteers were motivated to extend the volunteering period, some IVPs suffered amendments during the period of volunteering (see folder Annex III – "Deliverables of the Project").



The volunteers are contacted by the partnership in various ways, such as, from the data base of the PASS platform, from volunteering banks, in conferences, or directly in workshops or initiatives that the partners do. Some volunteers have been received in the project after having contacted directly the associations searching for internships or volunteering programs and were afterwards advised to engage with LIFE VOLUNTEER ESCAPES. The direct contact represents the main way of recruitment of volunteers at the moment, despite not being the most resource-effective measure. For example, MONTIS had to contact more than 320 volunteers to receive 4 volunteers on the last months.

Regarding the joint volunteering program, the action is starting to run better than previously, however still under what was expected. Several new decisions were made to improve the development of the program. The partnership decided to accept volunteers that are already in the project and have manifested interest to be joint-volunteers and also volunteers that have discontinuously made part of the project in different associated beneficiaries. These decisions are described in detail under the Action A.3.

### Progress Indicators

<b>Indicator</b>	<b>Foreseen in the application</b>	<b>2nd Progress Report</b>
% of IVP approved/delivered for each action	100	98
Number of joint work meetings	3	5
Number of external stakeholders contacted to prepare IVPs	18	10

### **A.2 Updating Information on Concrete Conservation Areas and Detailing Conservation Activities/Tasks**

State: completed

Foreseen start date: 01/01/2018

Actual start date: 01/01/2018

Foreseen end date: 30/06/2018

Actual (or anticipated) end date: 15/03/2019

The action is completed. The main *deliverable* “Action Report” was completed by all the beneficiaries on the 15/03/2019, with a delay of 9 months from the foreseen date (30/06/2018) due to a set of difficulties found from the beneficiary APA ARH-Algarve that have delayed the preparation of the characterisation files for the intervention sites. All the remaining beneficiaries involved on this Action have delivered the intervention sites materials on the 08/06/2018.

With the inclusion of the data from APA ARH-Algarve, the partnership has improved and delivered this *deliverable* as expressed on the last report, Annex III – “Deliverables of the Project”.

### Progress Indicators

<b>Indicator</b>	<b>Foreseen in the application</b>	<b>2nd Progress Report</b>
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Number of maps with operational plots delivered by project partners	7	53
% of concrete conservation areas with updated field information and proposal of operational plots	100	100
Number of joint work meetings	3	4

### **A.3 Joint Volunteering Program for integration of ESC with nature and biodiversity conservation**

State: on going

Foreseen start date: 01/07/2018

Actual start date: 24/10/2018

Foreseen end date: 30/03/2020

Actual (or anticipated) end date: 16/12/2020

The action is delayed compared to the foreseen in the application.

From the 16 joint-volunteers foreseen in the application, corresponding to 4032 days of volunteering, 7 joint-volunteers have been received in the project until March 2020 by the partners MONTIS, MARCA ADL, ROTA VICENTINA, P1A and SPEA corresponding in total to 798 volunteering days.

Marca had foreseen 2 joint-volunteers for a total of 126 volunteering days and has received 3 joint-volunteers, corresponding to 280 volunteering days, one volunteer being previously at MONTIS and two at ROTA VICENTINA considered “discontinuous” joint-volunteers.

MONTIS had foreseen, as accepted in the last reporting, 16 joint-volunteers corresponding to 3024 volunteering days. The beneficiary has received 4 joint-volunteers since the beginning of the project corresponding to 273 volunteering days.

P1A had foreseen 2 joint-volunteers corresponding to 126 volunteering days and has received 2 joint-volunteer corresponding to 56 volunteering days until March 2020.

The first joint-volunteer was received in 2018 and was at SPEA one year later in a non-continuous situation. The proposal was that SPEA would receive two volunteers for three months each and to be rotative later on with MONTIS. But, considering the interest manifested by the volunteer to apply again to the project at another partner, keeping the mobility between partners and that this situation was only communicated to the European Commission in 2019, the volunteer was only now considered joint-volunteer.

In February 2020, was accepted a new joint-volunteer between P1A and MONTIS, however due to the volunteer disrespect towards the rules imposed by the pandemic, the volunteer was asked to leave the project before completing his volunteering period foreseen at the associations.

Two of the regular volunteers received at ROTA VICENTINA have later engaged with a second volunteering period at MARCA, being therefore switched to be considered joint-volunteers, according to the described in Action A.3.

RV has completed the joint volunteering days foreseen in the application and has in reality received 2 regular volunteers instead of 4 until March 2020.

SPEA had foreseen 2 joint-volunteers corresponding to 126 volunteering days and has received 2 joint-volunteers until March 2020, 1 with P1A that corresponded to 63 volunteering days and a second one with MONTIS that is yet to start the volunteering program in SPEA (June 2020). The number of joint-volunteers foreseen in the application is expected to not be achieved until October 2020, despite all the efforts of the partnership described below.

The action was scheduled to start on the beginning of July 2018, being the first joint-volunteer welcomed, as already reported, at 24/10/2018, completing the *milestone* “Welcome to the first volunteers”.

Difficulties continue to exist in finding interested volunteers in the joint-volunteering program, due to: the still mal-function of the PASS platform; new volunteers not being interested in the joint-volunteering program; or the longer time commitment from the volunteers. The partnership had to discuss other possibility to improve the development of action A.3. The partnership considered then the possibility of “discontinuous” joint-volunteers, which means that a volunteer received in the project for x months at one partner, completing the agreed volunteering period and is later on received in the project at a different partner completing the agreed volunteering period will be considered a joint-volunteer. For example, a volunteer that engaged with the project in 2018 at the beneficiary P1A for the duration of 2 months, and that engaged again in the project in 2019 but at the beneficiary SPEA for the duration of 2 months as well. Technically the volunteer will gain equally the same skills and participation in the project as a joint-volunteer foreseen in the application and therefore would be viable to be considered as a joint-volunteer. These discontinuous volunteers have the advantage of choosing when to engage with which association, which has proven to be one factor that influence volunteers to engage with the project for longer periods of time. This allows for example, student volunteers to be in the project during summer holidays and learn and experience the conservation work at different associations. This “discontinuous” joint-volunteers will have a different volunteering agreement and IVP for each associated beneficiary they volunteer with, to avoid confusions.

The partnership agreed to also consider joint-volunteers, the ones that engage with the project at more than one associated beneficiary without taking part of the project at MONTIS.

The reimbursement of travel expenses of these volunteers will be paid by the beneficiaries that receive them.

As reported previously and suggested by the EC, MONTIS, with the budget for the joint volunteers that are not foreseen in the other partners and therefore not distributed in the application, will discuss the distribution of this amount with the partners that could accept more joint volunteers than expected. If not possible the budget will be shared between the actions A.4 to A.11 for beneficiaries that can receive more regular volunteers. Ideally MONTIS would increase the number of regular volunteers received in Action A.6. However, it is important to refer that MONTIS has restrictions concerning the logistics needed to welcome more volunteers (namely, the number of cars available to take the volunteers to the field and accommodation availability). In order to help to understand this situation the Excel produced for the last report was updated with the number of volunteers foreseen and welcomed, the budget and the executed until the end of December- This document is attached to the present report in “Annex XII - Volunteers (foreseen and executed)”.

Progress indicators

Indicator	Foreseen in the application	2nd Progress Report
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% of ESC volunteers acquiring new competencies and skills, useful for nature conservation	100	100
% of ESC volunteers fully satisfied with their deployment	90	In evaluation
Average number of new skills competencies acquired by ESC volunteers useful for nature conservation	2 to 4	In evaluation
% of increase in number of activities for nature conservation deployed by partner organizations, compared to historical work	125	In evaluation
Number of organisations capacitated for undertaking new activities for nature conservation	9	0
Number of joint volunteering programs with national aim in operation after the project ends	1	0

#### **A.4 Volunteering for awareness-raising on natural capital protection, conservation and enhancement**

State: on going

Foreseen start date: 01/07/2018

Actual start date: 01/08/2018

Foreseen end date: 30/06/2020

Actual (or anticipated) end date: 16/12/2020

The action is globally running as expected.

BCSD had foreseen in the application the welcoming of 2 volunteers, 12 months each, corresponding to 504 volunteering days. The first volunteer was welcomed on the 01/08/2018, completing the *milestone* “Welcome to first volunteers” foreseen for the 01/07/2018. However, the volunteer has terminated the volunteering programme before expected in August 2019, and therefore it was necessary to increase the number of volunteers welcomed to achieve the foreseen in the application. BCSD will receive 3 volunteers, corresponding to the 504 days of volunteering foreseen.

Until March 2020, the beneficiary welcomed 3 volunteers corresponding to 375 volunteering days, continuing to give answer to the *milestone* “2 volunteers trained on project and events management and natural capital and business relation (A.4.1)”, foreseen for the 31/08/2020

As presented in the last report, the “PPT presentation about natural capital for students” was prepared in the time expected, completing the corresponding *deliverable* foreseen for the 30/09/2018 (see folder Annex III – “Deliverables of the Project”).

The publication of the brochure about natural capital for companies corresponding to the *deliverable* “Brochure about natural capital for business (A.4.4)”, is foreseen to be completed by the 31/07/2020, with a delay to the foreseen in the application due to constraints with

changing personnel and pandemic impacts. The *deliverable* “8 Business case studies about natural capital protection and/or conservation (A.4.3) foreseen for the 31/05/2020 will also present a delay due to SARS-CoV-2 impacts (sessions cancelled) and is expected to be completed by the 31/07/2020.

Regarding the *milestones*, and with the impacts caused by the global pandemic that lead to the cancellation of several activities and sessions foreseen in the application, the following *milestones* will be affected:

- 8 Good practices sharing sessions among companies and their stakeholders (A.4.4) foreseen for the 31/07/2020 are expected to be completed by the 31/09/2020
- 8 Awareness-raising sessions for young entrepreneurs, start-ups and SMEs (A.4.4) foreseen for the 31/07/2020 are expected to be completed by the 31/09/2020

In order to decrease slightly the impacts caused by the cancellation of the scheduled sessions, BCSD has adapted some of the sessions to webinar format, however this adaptation is not ideal as the sessions often are composed by an important interactive part that allows the companies to engage with nature conservation; For example, the sessions “Learning by Sharing, are divided into two components: a theoretical part with the project presentation in a room and a field visit. These field visits are organised to be done in an intervention area from a company or enterprise, and to show the conservation work done by them to the session participants, sharing the lessons learned from working with nature conservation.

During the period of reporting 4 more awareness-raising sessions for secondary students occurred, completing a total of 56 sessions, already exceeding by 8 sessions the *milestone* “48 awareness-raising sessions for secondary students (A.4.5)” foreseen for the 30/06/2020.

The activities foreseen in the application for BCSD, that were implemented during the reporting period are:

- Initiation and finalization of the selection process, recruitment, preparation and training of the second volunteer (A.4.1);
- Elaboration of the contents and the new structure for the brochure on natural capital for companies (A.4.4);
- Elaboration of the TV-series episode on "Companies and Natural Capital" (Action B.3)
- Elaboration of the PPT on natural capital for Good practices sharing session among companies and their stakeholders (A.4.4.3)
- 3 Good practices sharing sessions among companies and their stakeholders. (A.4.3)

As expected, in the period to which this report corresponds, the expected results in the application (i. Capacitation and skills offered to volunteers, ii. Capacitation of the participating organizations (businesses) and iii. Quality / usefulness of the raising works), have been achieved, however, not totally. It is considered that, according to schedule, they will be reached by the end of the project.

Progress Indicators

<b>Indicator</b>	<b>Foreseen in the application</b>	<b>2nd Progress Report</b>
Average number of activities organized and implemented by each volunteer	32	29

Number of good practices sharing sessions among companies and their stakeholders	8	3
Number of companies and stakeholder's representatives in the good practices sharing sessions	200	92
Number of awareness-raising for young entrepreneurs and start-ups	8	0
Number of entrepreneurs and start-ups representatives in the awareness-raising sessions	120	0
Number of awareness-raising sessions for secondary school students	48	56
Number of secondary students in the awareness-raising sessions	960	3457
Number of businesses evaluating positively the usefulness of ESC volunteers for awareness raising and good practice dissemination	20	0

#### **A.5 Volunteering Activities for Green Infrastructure within the Municipality of Montemor-o-Novo**

State: on going

Foreseen start date: 01/07/2018

Actual start date: 12/04/2018

Foreseen end date: 30/06/2020

Actual (or anticipated) end date: 16/12/2020

The action is running as expected.

MARCA had foreseen in the application the receiving of 12 regular volunteers (1512 volunteering days) and, at 12/04/2018 has welcomed the first regular volunteer giving answer to the *milestone* "Welcome of first volunteers" foreseen for 01/07/2018, 3 months before expected. Until March 2020, has welcomed 10 regular volunteers, corresponding to 1274 volunteering days. A deviation regarding the period of volunteering for some volunteers occurred due to some volunteers finishing their volunteering agreement before expected to enter labour market.

Nonetheless this deviation did not pose any problem or constrain.

The works regarding the maintenance of MARCA nursery began with the volunteers' arrival. After authorization from Montemor-o-Novo Municipality, the volunteers work has started in the intervention areas under management or owned by the municipality. There was a delay on planting actions and maintenance of the nursery, until the end of November 2019 due to the low-precipitation in 2018 and 2019, and despite the measures taken to maximize soil-humidity

at the time of planting and production, the mortality rates were still higher than predicted. In 2020 an effort for plantations is being made to compensate the initial delay.

Different audiences have been involved in different volunteering activities developed by MARCA with the support of the project volunteers, such as local schools mainly with the volunteering club of Montemor-o-Novo secondary school, volunteers from other volunteering programmes such as Youth Volunteering Projects and International Work Camps and other participants from the local community and local institutions, as for example Municipality of Montemor-o-Novo or the parish council. The activities organised supported the conservation work in the intervention areas with sowing and plantation of native species, control of IAS and restoration of water courses.

The project's progress indicators already achieved or exceed are the following: more than 2ha of riparian habitats improved/restored intervened, 2500 native plants produced, involvement of more than 2400 volunteers in different activities, involvement of 15 landowners in conservation actions and networking with two other LIFE projects' in order to improve nature conservation work (LIFE LINES and LIFE Montado-adapt).

Progress indicators not achieved yet, but foreseen to be achieved within the duration of the action are, at least: 78% of IAS are controlled; 71% of Habitats Directive improved; 75% of number of plants used in plantation actions; satisfaction of the volunteers is a progress indicator that is still being assessed and only after receiving all the evaluation surveys will be presented.

Some landowners have shown some reluctance in some of the implemented actions, such as control of IAS. These translated into stopping these actions on some areas and more difficulty to identify and contact the owners of areas. To overcome these constraints the cooperation of authorities and parishes was essential.

### Progress Indicators

<b>Indicator</b>	<b>Foreseen in the application</b>	<b>2nd Progress Report</b>
Area of habitats protected by the Habitats Directive improved (ha)	12	8,70
Area of riparian habitats improved/restored (ha)	1,2	2,22
Area of IAS controlled (ha)	8	6,48
Number of autochthonous trees and shrubs produced and planted	2000	2500
Number of autochthonous plants planted in conservation works	2000	1921
% of ESC volunteers acquiring new competencies and skills, useful for nature conservation	100	100
% of ESC volunteers fully satisfied with their deployment	80	In evaluation

Number of local volunteers – from LIFE LINES Volunteering Program – participating in joint activities with ESC volunteers	75	2332
Number of local landowners engaged in nature conservation activities following contacts with ESC volunteers	10	15
Number of LIFE funded projects with which ESC volunteer will iterate	1	2

## A.6 Volunteering Activities for improvement of nature and biodiversity conservation in private land

State: on going

Foreseen start date: 01/07/2018

Actual start date: 19/03/2018

Foreseen end date: 30/06/2020

Actual (or anticipated) end date: 16/12/2020

The action is developing as expected.

MONTIS welcomed the first volunteer at 19/03/2018, completing the *milestone* “Welcome to first volunteers” 4 months before the foreseen in application (01/07/2018). In application MONTIS had foreseen 30 regular volunteers, corresponding to 3780 volunteering days.

Until March 2020, MONTIS has welcomed 32 volunteers (corresponding to 1991 volunteering days), 17 new volunteers during the last period of reporting. These volunteers correspond to 52,7% of the volunteers foreseen in application, which indicates the action is below expected regarding the reception of volunteers. However, all efforts are being made to overcome this delay. To reach more volunteers and to overcome the still remaining problems with PASS platform, direct contacts started being made with volunteers and a second accommodation was rented to increase the number of volunteers that can be received at the same time. For the first trimester of 2020, 18 volunteers were already foreseen to participate in the project. However, due to the constraint regarding the SARS-CoV-2, the reception of new volunteers in March was suspended and therefore more than half of the 18 volunteers were postponed to star their volunteering from June onwards.

The volunteers have been given different tasks regarding land management. The tasks are being adapted to the profile and skills of the volunteers, thus maximizing the efficiency of the volunteering. Some volunteers have been working closely with the community, developing studies on biodiversity and landscape assessment. Nevertheless, all volunteers have been working on the intervention sites described in the plan under Action A.2, performing the foreseen conservation works (plantations, supporting of natural regeneration, direct seeding, control of IAS, maintenance of paths, etc.). These works have resulted in almost 12 ha of native forest on of Natura 2000 “Serra das Freita e Arada” (PTCON0047) and “Rio Paiva” (PTCON0059) areas.

Between March 2019 and March 2020, the volunteers have been involved in several activities for nature conservation that have gathered more than 600 participants. They have participated on 2



International Workcamps: one within the scope of the LIFE ELCN (LIFE16 PRE/DE/000005) where the volunteers acted as monitors and helped the participants to perform different tasks, such as natural engineering techniques and another International Workcamp, open to public in general, where the volunteers engaged on different workshops (natural engineering, invasive alien species, nature sounds and bat captures and identifications) providing new skills and knowledge in different areas of nature conservation.

An effort to increase the interaction and sharing of volunteering experiences between MONTIS volunteers and other associated beneficiaries' volunteers has been made, hence on May 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> 2019, the association organised a natural engineering workshop and invited to participate the LIFE VOLUNTEER ESCAPES volunteers at the time in all associated beneficiaries. This workshop worked as capacity building for volunteers. The associated beneficiary P1A (Sintra and Vila Pouca de Aguiar) as also engaged with the 2019/2020 plantation season in MONTIS, donating 2000 trees in December 2019 and another 2000 trees in February 2020, joining in its plantation with their ESC volunteers.

During 2019, MONTIS has launched its 3<sup>rd</sup> Crowdfunding campaign to acquire 11 ha of marginal lands in Central Portugal for nature conservation, the volunteers have helped sharing the campaign and have contributed to one of the donation rewards with a digital booklet that included nature guides for animal and vegetation identification, support of natural regeneration and nature drawings.

Due to the cancellation of open activities from March onwards due to the global pandemic, and in order to readjust the work in MONTIS, the ESC volunteers were divided into 2 groups, for digital tasks and on-field tasks until mid-April 2020. The on-field conservation work has proceeded as normal since mid-April.

Besides the achieved and exceeded indicators regarding number of autochthonous plants planted, the ESC volunteers have also been involved in different activities with External Partner institutions (public or non-profit and private) such as ASSOL – Associação de Solidariaedade Social de Lafões that works with mental and physical handicap people, local secondary schools and a partner school from Pinhal-Novo (Lisbon), local professional schools, university volunteering associations such as VO.U – Associação de Voluntariado Universitário, companies for tourism such as The Wanderlust or A2Z and other companies that engage in team building activities in nature conservation, for example, Auchan Group.

### Progress Indicators

<b>Indicator</b>	<b>Foreseen in the application</b>	<b>2nd Progress Report</b>
Area of IAS controlled (ha)	20	6,46
Number of autochthonous plants planted	3000	12593
Number of erosion control devices set in water lines with natural engineering works	120	67
Area of habitats protected by the Habitats Directive improved (ha)	20	12,75
% of ESC volunteers acquiring new competencies	100	100

and skills, useful for nature conservation		
% of ESC volunteers fully satisfied with their deployment	80	In evaluation
Number of other volunteers, from local community and public and private bodies, participating in joint activities with ESC volunteers	240	1118
Number of other volunteers, with MONTIS membership, participating in joint activities with ESC volunteers	120	214
Number of partner institutions (public or non-profit) engaged in nature conservation support and participating in joint activities with ESC volunteers	4	25
Number of partner institutions (companies) engaged in nature conservation support and participating in joint activities with ESC volunteers	4	8
Number of LIFE funded projects with which ESC volunteers will iterate	1	3
New jobs created and expected to be maintained for the post-project	1	3

### **A.7 Volunteering Activities for nature conservation within the Municipality of Torres Vedras**

State: on going

Foreseen start date: 01/07/2018

Actual start date: 06/11/2018

Foreseen end date: 30/06/2020

Actual (or anticipated) end date: 16/12/2020

The action is globally delayed. Initially, MTV had foreseen 6 volunteers during 12 months corresponding to 1512 volunteering days. The first volunteers were received at 06/11/2018, completing the *milestone* “Welcome of first volunteers” foreseen for 01/07/2018. Until March 2020, MTV has welcomed 14 volunteers (with 3 terminating the program before expected) corresponding to 612 volunteering days, showing a significative delay to the foreseen in

application. This delay is mainly due to difficulties in assuring volunteers continuously, whether it is for unavailability of the volunteers or MTV's logistics, the number of effective volunteering days is below the predicted. In order to minimize this, more volunteers were welcomed in the beginning of 2020 which allowed a total of 9 volunteers, and the team to be completed with 6 members per volunteering day.

The volunteers have been involved in plantations of autochthonous species, maintenance of plantations (including watering and silviculture) in municipal lands and on coastal areas, some of which in collaboration with other entities and general population. Besides, volunteers also participated in the control of invasive alien species (e.g. *Carpobrotus edulis*) and shelling acacia trunk. Moreover, volunteers have been developing some supporting activities in the Municipal Nursery, namely sowing and species inventory. It is also worth mentioning that maintenance work was carried out in riparian galleries in order to benefit the habitat of the native species Ruivaco-do-Oeste (*Achondrostoma occidentale*). It was also possible to develop other activities such as the identification of dune plants, namely "camarinha" (*Corema album*), given the large decrease in this area of invasive species.

During the time of reporting, several indicators were exceeded such as "Area of habitats protected by the Habitats Directive improved (ha)" foreseen in application for 7 ha and having achieved 22,5 ha as well as "Number of autochthonous trees and shrubs produced and planted" foreseen for 2000 plants planted and being achieved the plantation of 7125 autochthonous trees and dune plants. It is also important to highlight that was foreseen the engagement in joint-volunteering activities with ESC volunteers to be 80 participants and has now exceeded the foreseen to 1327 people engaging in volunteering activities. ESC volunteers had the possibility to engage with different publics in volunteering activities such as local schools (e.g. Escola de São Gonçalo, EB 2,3 do Maxial and Externato de Penafirme) and companies/non-profit associations such as Grupo NOAH, Império e Areias do Seixo, Norauto, FISICA Torres Vedras, Escuteiros de Torres Vedras and GNR – Guarda Nacional Republicana.

From March onwards the volunteering activities in MTV have been suspended due to the pandemic legislation and therefore the project volunteers were dismissed from activities until further notice. The volunteers will return according to the evolution of the situation and it is foreseen that the number of volunteers accepted per day of volunteering in the team will decrease has a prevention measure.

#### Progress Indicators

<b>Indicator</b>	<b>Foreseen in the application</b>	<b>2nd Progress Report</b>
Area of habitats protected by the Habitats Directive improved (ha)	7	22,5
Length of riparian habitats improved/restored for <i>Achondrostoma occidentale</i> (km)	1	0,8
Area of IAS controlled (ha)	8	15,16
Number of autochthonous trees and shrubs produced and planted	2000	7125

% of ESC volunteers acquiring new competencies and skills, useful for nature conservation	100	100
% of ESC volunteers fully satisfied with their deployment	80	40
Number of local volunteers – from Local Volunteer Bank – participating in joint activities with ESC volunteers	80	1327
Number of local landowners engaged in nature conservation activities following contacts with ESC volunteers	10	2
Number of corporations engaged in nature conservation support and participating in joint activities with ESC volunteers	10	6
Number of non-profit organizations engaged in nature conservation support and participating in joint activities with ESC volunteers	4	4

### **A.8 Volunteer Programs for Native Habitats Restoration, Promotion and Conservation and Management of Visitation Impacts**

State: on going

Foreseen start date: 01/07/2018

Actual start date: 09/07/2018

Foreseen end date: 30/06/2020

Actual (or anticipated) end date: 16/12/2020

The action is running as expected.

P1A had foreseen in the application the welcome of 64 regular volunteers, corresponding to 8064 volunteering days and achieved the *milestone* “Welcome of first volunteers” foreseen for 01/07/2018 on 09/07/2018. Until March 2020, P1A received 54 regular volunteers corresponding to 4094 volunteering days. 1 regular volunteer was excluded from the project in 2019 with less than the minimum of 42 voluntary days due to bad behaviour forcing omission of identity during a community initiative, refusing to collaborate in the coordination work.

The new indicator “Number of national field trips” gave access to new intervention areas to continue the conservation tasks, helping to achieve the proposed number of native trees to plant in the application and exceed it as well as create opportunities for exchange of experiences between P1A regional teams and with the volunteers with other partners, and even create

opportunities for the volunteers to have new hands-on-field learning approaches when visiting and working in the other properties with different ecological contexts and management strategies.

In general, P1A predicts to achieve most of the action A8 indicators. From the ones delayed, namely, the area of control of exotics it's expected to keep near the presented number for operational reasons of keeping consolidation the areas with previous interventions. The percentage of volunteers satisfied with the experience we expect to keep increasing with the more answers.

Regarding the global movement to raise environmental awareness, the volunteers were also involved in the global climate strike, joining the three national ones in 2019.

The number of volunteers to receive until the end of the program should keep increasing but we predict to be below the proposal or at least with fewer voluntary days being done due to more availability to stay less than the six continuous months proposed. As so, with the action A8 predicted to finish in June 2020, contacts next to the local co-financer Vila Pouca de Aguiar municipality and the local stakeholder Parques de Sintra-Monte da Lua were being made in order to evaluate the possibility to extend the action period until December 2020 to increase the results. However, due to the impacts caused by the SARS-CoV-2 pandemic, was not possible to receive new volunteers from March onwards and the recruitment of volunteers was also compromised by the uncertainty to the extension volunteering periods of the actual volunteers and the mobility restrains between European countries.

On the last report, the new indicator “Number of formation sessions with local community” was reported with an error of 13 sessions more than the actual completed. This error has been fixed.

The volunteers until March 2020, have been involved alongside the activities in the intervention areas of the action, in five field-trips to the beneficiaries MARCA and MONTIS, were they have participated in the conservation tasks designated in the partners. They were also involved in three activities with a private landowner, one with Fundação Mata do Bussaco and one with Regional Environment Government in Azores, completing 14 field trips just between April 2019 and March 2020.

The field trip to Azores in Santa Maria island was an opportunity for networking with the Life Vidalia project to exchange technical knowledge regarding the removal of the alien exotic species *Agave americana* to promote the conservation of the endemic habitat of *Lotus azoricus*. Still regarding networking with other projects, two voluntary activities with the community were organized in Mata Nacional da Machada, intervention area under the project Life Biodiscoveries, for capacity building to organise voluntary initiatives to control and remove exotic alien species of acacias.

Due to the global pandemic, from March onwards the group activities were cancelled. To compensate the impacts from less participants, the field-days only with the project volunteers have increased and the conservation works (control of invasive species, plantations, etc) have been kept even in a smaller scale impact due to the absence of voluntary activities.

#### Progress Indicators

<b>Indicator</b>	<b>Foreseen in the application</b>	<b>2nd Progress Report</b>
Area of IAS controlled (ha)	12	7

Number of autochthonous plants planted	6000	18231
Number of plants propagated in nursery	8440	2526
Area of N2000 forest habitats improved with conservation works (ha)	20	35,9
Length of interpretation trails maintained/restored (km)	40	41,8
% of ESC volunteers acquiring new competencies and skills, useful for nature conservation	100	97
% of ESC volunteers fully satisfied with their deployment	80	51
Number of other volunteers, from local community and public and private bodies, participating in joint activities with ESC volunteers	480	4172
Number of local institutions engaged in nature conservation support and participating in joint activities with ESC volunteers	8	29
New jobs created and expected to be maintained for the post-project	2	2

<b>New indicators</b>	<b>Mid-term Report</b>	<b>2nd Progress Report</b>
Number of national field trips (Un)”	5	22
Number of formation sessions with local community (Un)	24	11
Number of media publications (Un)	27	85

### **A.9 Volunteering Activities for nature conservation along the Rota Vicentina Nature Trail**

State: on going

Foreseen start date: 01/01/2019

Actual start date: 07/01/2019

Foreseen end date: 30/04/2020

Actual (or anticipated) end date: 16/12/2020

The action is globally advanced.

In application, RV had foreseen the welcome of 6 regular volunteers corresponding to 378 volunteering days. Until March 2020, RV has received 4 volunteers, corresponding to 226 volunteering days, and completed the *milestone* “Welcome of first volunteers” foreseen for 01/07/2018 on 07/01/2019. However, two of the welcomed volunteers have later engaged in a second volunteering period in MARCA, being therefore switched to be considered joint-volunteers, according to the described in Action A.3.

RV has completed the foreseen joint volunteering days in application and has in reality received 2 regular volunteers until March 2020. New efforts are being made in 2020 to receive more regular volunteers.

During this period, 25ha of areas for invasive flora species control have been intervened by the ESC volunteers. We chose as pilot areas, zones in which the native vegetation is dominant, but threatened by invasive species, the work carried out consisted of weeding young invasive plants (acacias). A small area was beginning to be invaded by a *Carpobrotus edulis*. In total, 7585 acacias have been removed and 14m<sup>2</sup> of *Carpobrotus edulis*.

24 hikes with volunteers and 2 hikes in autonomy were done for maintenance and restoration of the directional equipment and trail signage (Annex VIII – Monitoring of the Tasks of the Volunteers).

The volunteers have participated in 5 environmental awareness activities in local schools and within the community with the goal of raising awareness of possible threats of invasive species and methods of their control. All the educational tools used within these activities, such as posters, leaflets, presentations, quizzes and games were created and prepared by the volunteers themselves (Annex VIII – Monitoring of the Tasks of the Volunteers).

Furthermore it is important to highlight that the indicator “Area of IAS controlled (within N2000 Sites PTCON0012 and PTZPE0015, in ha, with a minimum expected target of 2 ha invaded by *Acacia sp* and/or *Carpobrotus edulis*)” has been vastly exceed to 25 ha been intervened by the ESC volunteers and the indicator “Number of other volunteers, from public and private bodies, participating in joint activities with ESC volunteers” foreseen in application to engage 40 volunteers has also be exceed with a volunteer engagement of 224 participants.

### Progress Indicators

<b>Indicator</b>	<b>Foreseen in the application</b>	<b>2nd Progress Report</b>
Length of Rota Vicentina trails maintained/restored (km)	450	252,5
Area of IAS controlled (ha)	2	25
% of ESC volunteers acquiring new competencies and skills, useful for nature conservation	100	100
% of ESC volunteers fully satisfied with their deployment	80	100
Number of other volunteers, from public and private bodies, participating in joint activities with ESC volunteers	40	224

Number of corporations from the tourism sector engaged in nature conservation support and participating in joint activities with ESC volunteers	20	5
Number of public bodies from the tourism sector engaged in nature conservation support and participating in joint activities with ESC volunteers	5	2

### A.10 Volunteering Activities for Bird Conservation

State: on going

Foreseen start date: 01/10/2018

Actual start date: 08/10/2018

Foreseen end date: 30/09/2020

Actual (or anticipated) end date: 16/12/2020

The action is running as expected.

SPEA has foreseen in the application the receiving of 23 regular volunteers corresponding to 2898 volunteering days. Receiving the first volunteers on 01/10/2018 completing the *milestone* “Welcome of first volunteers” foreseen for 01/07/2018.

Until March 2020, SPEA welcomed 19 regular volunteers that corresponded to 1616 volunteering days.

Conservation of marine birds in Berlengas:

The volunteers work started at 01/10/2018, as foreseen in application. Until the end of 2019, 8 volunteers were involved, in two periods of work. In both groups received (first from October 2018 to March 2019 and second from May to November 2019) it was expected to have 3 volunteers for 6 months each, but during the interviews 2 volunteers (one in each group) informed that just wanted to stay for 3 months. So, SPEA opened another vacation to full fill the total period considered in the application. These volunteers performed several field interventions within the scope of the Conservation Plan After-LIFE Berlengas, mainly on invasive plants control (*Carpobrotus edulis*), monitoring seabirds populations (Band-rumped Storm-petrel, Cory’s Shearwater and European Shag), construction and maintenance of artificial nests for Cory’s Shearwater, supporting the works on invasive mammals control, ringing Yellow-legged Gull chicks and Cory’s shearwater chicks, support on the implementation of biosecurity measures; monitoring native vegetation and seabird census from the coast.

Besides the fieldwork in Berlengas the volunteers had the chance to participate on other activities promoted by SPEA increasing their knowledge about birds and promoting cooperation between other SPEA volunteers and staff. At the office the volunteers have been improving their skills on inserting and analysing data, write texts and reports for awareness of Berlengas visitors and Portuguese population. The volunteers also helped on visualisation of the photos collected by camera traps and will help to prepare a report regarding the occupation



of Cory's Shearwater artificial nests, prepare maps regarding the distribution of endemic plants and compare evolution of the vegetation cover from 2016 to 2020.

At the moment, the 3 volunteers selected for the 6 months period foreseen in 2020 have started their volunteering in Berlengas in January 2020. Although in the application it was foreseen to start in December 2019, we evaluated the tasks scheduled and with the agreement of all partners we decided to postpone the volunteer from January to June 2020. The volunteers have been involved in coastal census of seabirds, monitoring the Band-rumped Storm-petrel population in Farilhão, monitoring the automatic cameras to evaluate the disturbance of tourist visitation in the breeding areas of European Shag, transects to detect rabbits, monitoring rodent traps, removal of Hottentot Fig shoots throughout the intervention area, monitoring Shag nests and maintenance of artificial Cory Shearwater nests.

At the office these volunteers also helped in data insertion, analysis of data collected and preparation of some reports related to the project: analyses of data collected during coastal censuses in 2019; analysis of the images from the cameras that are monitoring the Shags as well the cameras monitoring Band-rumped Storm-petrel.

Throughout these months, significant results have been obtained, such as the removal of *Carpobrotus* from 3.5 ha, the construction of 20 artificial nests and the maintenance of 70 Cory's Shearwater nests and improvement/maintenance of two nature trails.

Interpretation Centre of Lagoa Pequena – Sesimbra (ELIP):

In 2019, the Lagoa Pequena Interpretative Centre welcomed two volunteers, between 25th May and 15th September, one stayed for 3.5 months and the other for 3 months.

Initially, it was planned to receive only 1 volunteer, but an opportunity arose to receive also a rotating volunteer. It was a very positive situation for the site because with more volunteers it was possible to do more than expected for this period.

The volunteers were in charge of digitizing and analysing the registration of visitors and satisfaction questionnaires and elaborate reports about it and also participated in activities for schools and families.

The guided tour model implemented was a success and the volunteers carried out more than twice the visits planned for this period: 24 visits were planned for the entire project and 31 were already carried out until now.

The objectives mentioned in the application were largely exceeded, and it was also possible:

- (1) to develop and improve various teaching resources, such as the creation of new activities for the Educational Project,
- (2) to implement improvements in several infrastructures, in particular the repair of the fence and the maintenance of walking rails, which was highly commented and praised by visitors.

In February 2020, a new volunteer was welcomed to fulfil the volunteering days left from the previous volunteers in 2019 for Azores site. The volunteer performed, as planned, several tasks to support the functioning of the space, repairs and maintenance and monitoring of birds. In particular, he did guided visits, activities with schools, repaired nest boxes and began the work of mapping and monitoring heron nests. When the space closed to the public in the context of measures to prevent the spread of covid-19, he worked from home collecting and analysing information, having prepared an informational poster about the phenology of migratory passerines from Lagoa Pequena.

Recently, we analysed the candidates for the volunteer opportunity for Lagoa Pequena site for the summer time.

### Conservation of *Pyrrhula murina* in São Miguel (Azores)

The project started with only 4 of the 6 foreseen volunteers due to some late time desistence and in July 2019, 2 extra volunteers joined for the remaining 3 months' period. The volunteers were involved in several actions. Most of the time was dedicated to the tasks foreseen in the volunteer proposal, however since we realised that it would be motivating for the volunteers to collaborate with other actions in the project, we diversified the proposed activities for the volunteers. The list of actions, number of days dedicated to each action and results of the volunteer work can be seen in chapter 2.2 (Annex VIII – Monitoring of the Tasks of the Volunteers).

For the 2020 group, a plan was created to try to diversify the task to be developed by the volunteers. An important task in this year will be the help with the preparation of the Atlas do Priolo, this event, that takes place every 4 years, gathers 50 volunteers to count on the same day all the priolos in the world. The Volunteer Escapes' volunteer will not only have the opportunity to participate in the training and implementation of the Atlas do Priolo but will also be responsible for marking of the points for the counting of priolos.

At the end of 2019, 3 volunteers were selected for Azores site and it was expected to begin the work in April 2020. Due to Covid19 and the cancelations of flight for the Archipelago, the work did not start and we don't know if we can proceed with the work later on due to some of the tasks being seasonal. The situation will be analysed when the conditions are favourable and safe for all, and then decide to proceed or not with the volunteer work.

Until now several progress indicators were achieved and exceeded, such as 92ha of N2000 Area habitats improved or 90ha of IAS area controlled. Between the activities organised by SPEA, the indicators for local volunteers involved with joint activities with ESC volunteers, local institutions or municipalities engaged with nature conservation activities were also exceeded, throughout events with ISPA- Instituto Universitario de Ciências Psicológicas Social e da Vida, Professional School Agostinho Rosetta (Lagoa Pequena), ICNF or Sesimbra Municipality.

### Progress Indicators

<b>Indicator</b>	<b>Foreseen in the application</b>	<b>2nd Progress Report</b>
Area of N2000 priority habitats improved (ha)	30	92
Area of IAS controlled (ha)	20	90
Number of autochthonous plants produced/planted (ha)	30000	7500
% of ESC volunteers acquiring new competencies and skills useful for nature conservation	100	82
% of ESC volunteers fully satisfied with their deployment	80	80

Number of other local volunteers, from schools and resident population, participating in joint activities with ESC volunteers	480	1057
Number of local institutions with nature conservation support and/or participating in joint activities with ESC volunteers	10	6
Number of municipalities engaged in nature conservation support and participating in joint activities with ESC volunteers	1	4

### **A.11 Volunteering Activities for Conservation of Riparian/Aquatic Habitats within the Regional Structure for Environmental Protection and Conservation**

State: on going

Foreseen start date: 01/07/2018

Actual start date: 17/09/2018

Foreseen end date: 30/06/2020

Actual (or anticipated) end date: 16/12/2020

The action is developing as foreseen. Until March 2020, APA-ARH Algarve has received 3 volunteers from the 4 foreseen in application, corresponding to 528 volunteering days from the expected 1008 volunteering days.

The *milestone* “Welcome to first volunteers” was foreseen for 01/07/2018, and completed on 17/09/2018 with a 2 months delay with welcoming of volunteers due to difficulties regarding accommodation for the volunteers influenced by the touristic region where the workplace is situated. During the period here reported, one of the two volunteers originally foreseen for the 12 months period, left the project and another volunteer was welcomed to fulfil the remaining months to complete the 12 months period. Contrary to what was planned, on October 2019 APA-ARH Algarve didn't receive new volunteers, due to difficulties with administrative procedures and budget availability. To decrease the impacts of these internal issues, the beneficiary has made some extra efforts. To overcome the delay in approval of budget from administrative services for the project, the request for the needed budgets is been made with a larger advance time, for example to receive volunteers in June 2020 a request was made in January 2020. The beneficiary has also decided, after discussion with the coordinator beneficiary to receive more volunteers at the same time but for a shorter period of time instead of only 1 volunteer per 12 months.

Alongside the conservation tasks in the intervention areas, improving the riparian habitats and areas of IAS controlled, APA-ARH Algarve, despite not having new volunteers in October 2019 and in order to not stop the project action, continued the activities with the coordinators, in scope of the project with the local community and partnerships. In January and February 2020, the beneficiary organised ERVAA, Encontro Regional do Voluntariado Ambiental para

a Água (“Regional event for water environmental volunteering”) gathering 336 participants from local schools. The event involved the help of several External Partner Institutions such as Europe Direct, ICNF, Centros de Ciência Viva do Algarve e Tavira (Life Science Centers of Algarve and Tavira), local organisations and non-profit environmental and social associations. In Annex IV - Project Communication Materials can be found the notice board for the event and some pictures associated.

Between workshops and sensibilization events the organisation has involved until now 3980 participants in nature conservation matters.

The indicators “Area of IAS controlled (ha)”, “Number of local Volunteers participating in joint activities with ESC volunteers”, “Number of External Partner institutions (private) participating in joint activities with ESC volunteers” and “Number of External Partner institutions (public or non-profit) participating in joint activities with ESC volunteers” were already achieved, and are expected to be largely exceeded by the end of the project.

### Progress Indicators

<b>Indicator</b>	<b>Foreseen in the application</b>	<b>2nd Progress Report</b>
Length of riparian habitats improved/restored (km)	1	0,126
Area of IAS controlled (ha)	2	3,93
Number of local Volunteers participating in joint activities with ESC volunteers	500	2211
Number of External Partner institutions (private) participating in joint activities with ESC volunteers	4	10
Number of External Partner institutions (public or non-profit) participating in joint activities with ESC volunteers	16	46
% of ESC volunteers acquiring new competencies and skills, useful for nature conservation	100	100
% of ESC volunteers fully satisfied with their deployment	80	In evaluation

### **B.1 Definition and Implementation of Communication Program**

State: on going

Foreseen start date: 01/01/2018

Actual start date: 01/01/2018

Foreseen end date: 31/12/2020

Actual (or anticipated) end date: 31/12/2020

The action is in progress.

The initial delays in this action were overcome. The project's website and facebook page were developed, are online and fully operational, giving answer to the *deliverables* "Project's website online and fully operational" foreseen to 31/05/2018 and "Project's facebook page online and fully operational" foreseen to 31/01/2018, respectively.

The website and facebook page have helped to share the project to a larger range of people, mainly potential volunteers. The partnership posts continuously the development of activities, achievements with the project, feedback from project volunteers, etc. The *milestone* "First project post on facebook online and shared" foreseen for 31/01/2018 was completed. However, despite the progress indicator for Facebook page followers being below the expected, the partnership is making efforts to share the page and the project between their beneficiary's platform and requesting the ESC volunteers to do so, hopefully reaching to a larger audience.

The media visits to the intervention areas and TV coverage of the project works continue to progress, with the increase interest from National/Regional channels related to nature conservation for the results of using volunteering as a nature conservation tool to increase biodiversity (having achieved already the *milestone* "First media visit to intervention areas accomplished" and "First TV coverage of project works accomplished" as previously reported). During the period of report, MONTIS received the BIOSFERA team, a television program in National Television, for a reporting on the project, with interviews to the volunteers, project manager and assistants, and as well covering the conservation works being done and results already shown.

On September 10<sup>th</sup>, the project's mid-term seminar with the title "Volunteering for nature conservation" took place in Vila Nova de Gaia, Porto, in partnership with Vila Nova de Gaia Municipality that provided all the logistics. The seminar got together more than 30 participants including volunteers from different beneficiaries and ex-volunteers. The schedule was divided by: talk sessions in the morning, gathering 5 volunteering for conservation projects in Portugal and their results, and another LIFE preparatory project: LIFE FOLLOWERS. In the afternoon the seminar consisted in working groups for different problematics of the sustainability of volunteering for nature conservation projects. Annex IV – Project Communication Materials. A representative of ICNF, member of the project's Advisory Board engaged actively with the seminar, giving the opening session regarding the importance that volunteering has in nature conservation and the biodiversity goals it can achieve.

With this seminar, the *milestone* "Project's mid-term seminar concluded in Porto" foreseen for 31/12/2019 is therefore completed. The Final Project Seminar will be organised as foreseen for 31/12/2020 in Porto.

Some of the progress indicators foreseen have suffered a small impact due to the global pandemic, such as media visits promoted or radio news broadcasted. It is to be expected that more than half of each "below expected" indicator will be achieved by the end of the project, except the indicators related with NRN as the contacts have not been successful. The partnership will continue to make efforts regarding this.

Progress Indicators:

<b>Indicator</b>	<b>Foreseen in the application</b>	<b>2nd Progress Report</b>
Number of web site users	250	4633

Number of Facebook page followers	5000	1427
Number of links to project events posted by the National Rural Network website	12	0
Number of media visits promoted	20	7
Number of National TV news broadcasted	4	4
Number of radio news broadcasted	10	3
Number of press releases deployed	20	7
Number of press news	40	66
Number of similar organizations (NGO's, national/regional/local public administrations) attending technical seminars	80	72
Number of other members from the national rural network attending technical seminars	18	0
% of volunteers sharing their experiences though specific events	100	45

## **B.2 Production and Deployment of Teaser(s) to Raise Awareness and Engage ESC Volunteers**

State: finished

Foreseen start date: 01/01/2018

Actual start date: 01/01/2018

Foreseen end date: 30/09/2018

Actual (or anticipated) end date: 16/05/2019

Teaser for Engagement of Volunteers was initiated in January 2018 and ended on 16 May 2018, on the same date as its first publication (*milestone* “First public deployment of the teaser concluded, Foreseen for 15/04/2018). Although its conclusion was originally scheduled for 1 April 2018, the fact that it was a video for recruitment of volunteers was important for its display to be in articulation with the operation of volunteer registration platforms. This was the reason for the delay in completing this action. The video displayed on the Youtube and Vimeo had about 1600 views (the indicator “Youtube visualizations of the teaser(s)” had also the number of visualizations on the Vimeo, as was explained in the last report).

See “Annex III – Deliverables of the Project” to find the two versions (PT and EN) of the teaser. The indicator “In country ESC volunteers engaged” is only for in country volunteers. If all volunteers are counted, the number is 129.

### Progress Indicators

<b>Indicator</b>	<b>Foreseen in the application</b>	<b>2nd Progress Report</b>
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In country ESC volunteers engaged	175	50
Facebook views of the teaser(s)	12000	7133
Facebook shares of the teaser(s)	100	82
Youtube visualizations of the teaser(s)	2000	2258
Mails sent to deploy the teaser(s)	2000	0

### B.3 Production and Deployment of TV Series for Dissemination, Replication and Transfer

State: on going

Foreseen start date: 01/04/2018

Actual start date: 01/06/2018

Foreseen end date: 30/09/2019

Actual (or anticipated) end date: 01/10/2020

The action is delayed.

The episode of the TV-Series “Business and Natural Capital” was concluded at 21/06/2019 (see Annex III – Deliverables of the Project), completing the *deliverable* “TV Series – episode on “Business and Natural Capital” foreseen for 30/09/2018, with a delay mainly due to some late improvements from BCSD’s partners as previously reported. The episode is being shared by BCSD social media and channels, and uploaded to the project Youtube channel and Facebook with more than 500 visualizations.

For the TV-Series, 6 and half episodes have already been filmed (SPEA Berlengas and Azores, Rota Vicentina, Plantar uma Árvore Sintra, MONTIS Vermilhas, MARCA, Município de Torres-Vedras half). After the first episode for MTV was filmed, it was decided that the content scripted would not have the desired impact for the series, so the partnership decided to merge the two episodes from MTV in one single episode and use the remaining one to design an episode focused on the project itself, the impact, lessons learned, results of the project and future perspectives. Rota Vicentina, Plantar uma Árvore Sintra and MARCA’s episode are already produced, and the remaining are in production.

The production of all episodes was expected to be concluded by August 2020. The delay presented in the filming of the episodes relayed on different situations, such as activities not in scope with the script prepared for the episodes, activities with few participants that would not present the true impact of volunteering for nature conservation, seasonal activities that are scripted to be filmed or few ESC volunteers at the associations that would not give the impact intended for the TV series.

With the global pandemic with SARS-CoV-2, the filming of the remaining episodes was suspended. As a preventive measure to contain the virus all the beneficiaries have ceased the activities with participants that are not ESC volunteers, being a constraint to film without the impact expected. Alongside with this, the country also stated an emergency lockdown which made it impossible to travel for the filming.

The following episodes are still to be produced:

- 2 episodes for APA-ARH Algarve
- 1 episode for MONTIS
- Half episode for MTV

- 1 episode for Plantar uma Árvore Vila Pouca de Aguiar
- 1 episode for the project' lessons

The filming is expected to restart around July 2020.

Although requested by the EC in the last reply letter to the mid-term report, it is not possible to give guaranties that the TV-series will be broadcasted by SIC as the television emissary requests the presentation of the completed series to be approved before broadcasted, according to the letter attached to the application and in Annex V – Information about the TV series. However, when the 6 episodes in production (half of the TV series foreseen episodes) are produced, they will be shown to SIC Noticias, and an effort to get an approval for the broadcasting will be made. This is to be expected for July 2020.

#### Progress indicators

Indicator	Foreseen in the application	2nd Progress Report
Number of TV spectators watching the series	500000	0
Number of web downloads of the TV series – PT version	100	0
Number of web downloads of the TV series – EN version	200	0

#### **B.4 Networking with other LIFE project/teams**

State: started

Foreseen start date: 01/01/2018

Actual start date: 19/09/2018

Foreseen end date: 31/12/2020

Actual (or anticipated) end date: 31/12/2020

The action is globally delayed.

LIFE FOLLOWERS was invited and was present on the project seminar held in 10/09/2019 in Vila Nova de Gaia, with the title “Volunteering for nature conservation”, achieving therefore the *milestone* “Initial Networking invitation to visit project”.

The first networking visit to external projects was foreseen for May 2020, with an invitation from LIFE FOLLOWERS to their event “Followers, Young volunteers for the Natura 2000 Network”, however due to the COVID-19 this event has been postponed for later in 2020.

Besides the participations in joint activities with other LIFE projects in Portugal, mainly the ones involving the project beneficiaries (such as SPEA and MARCA), MONTIS has organised a seminar in partnership with LIFE BIODISCOVERIES in May 2019, where the ESCAPES volunteers were present and participated in the logistics of the event. The seminar gathered more than 30 people and was live broadcasted by Barreiro Municipality.

In 2019, MONTIS has submitted, as a partner, an application for an ESC volunteering project with the Latvian Fund for Nature, a contact that resulted from the networking made by the project manager and assistant in the “platform meeting” “Volunteering for Nature Conservation” in Tartu, Estonia that happened in September 2018.



MONTIS was invited to present the project and volunteering work in an ELCN Workshop in Romania, which had no related cost with our project. The invitation, besides from MONTIS being a beneficiary of LIFE ELCN, was in some extend due to the network resulting from the ELCN Workcamp organised by MONTIS in May 2019 and where the volunteers from our project have collaborated and helped the participants, shown the conservation work and its result.

SPEA organised a Conference "LIFE+ Terras do Priolo - Azores" to promote the work done in LIFE Berlengas and LIFE Volunteer Escapes. This conference was held in São Miguel (Azores) in May 2019. The beneficiary had the chance to exchange ideas with national and international groups working with control of invasive plants (e.g. Invasoras.pt; LIFE Fura-bardos from Madeira Island; LIFE STOP Cortaderia and mammals (LIFE PonDerat from Italy). This was important to evaluate the methodologies implemented in Berlenga and to know what is done on other parts of the world. The ESC volunteers in Berlengas had also the chance to participate in the activities of LIFE Ilhas Barreira (LIFE18 NAT/PT/000927), collaborating in the monitoring of seabirds, mammals and vegetation. This engagement allowed the volunteers to improve their skills and the discovery of a new Natura 2000 site.

SPEA and MONTIS were invited to participate in the Final Conference of LIFE Biodiscoveries project, presenting their work and the LIFE VOLUNTEER ESCAPES project. The conference was scheduled for 23<sup>rd</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup> of March but due to the SARS-CoV-2 pandemic was cancelled.

In January and February 2020, the ESC volunteers from P1A collaborated in the volunteering activities promoted by LIFE Biodiscoveries in Local Protected Area of Machada Forest and Coina Marshes for mainly the conservation task of IAS control and plantation of native species. During April 2019, P1A engagement with ESC volunteers in a trial experience for a new volunteering project in Azores, testing and elaborating a plan for short-term high impact intervention for invasive species control.

Due to the SARS-CoV-2 pandemic, several projects had to adapt their activities to new formats such as webinars, MARCA ADL participated in a LIFE Food & Biodiversity webinar/workshop that tackled the relation between biodiversity and the agri-food business.

All networking reports can be found in Annex III – Deliverables of the Project.

#### Progress Indicators

<b>Indicator</b>	<b>Foreseen in the application</b>	<b>2nd Progress Report</b>
Number of networking Synthesis Reports (with a critical review) delivered	10	10
Number of critical review reports delivered by invited LIFE projects	2	1
Number of external visits promoted to the project	2	0
Number of external LIFE project teams actively cooperating	20	7

Number of external LIFE project teams actively cooperating with the project beneficiaries after the project works	10	0
Number of external LIFE project teams actively cooperating in sending EU volunteer for the post-project join volunteering program	1	0

## C.1 Overall Project, Partnership and Stakeholder Management

State: on going

Foreseen start date: 01/01/2018

Actual start date: 01/01/2018

Foreseen end date: 31/12/2020

Actual (or anticipated) end date: 31/12/2020

The action is globally elapsing as expected.

### C1.1. Internal Management

The *milestones* “Contract signed with Project Manager”, foreseen for 01/01/2018 and “First Meeting of the Project Coordination Team Concluded” foreseen for 31/01/2018 were completed as previously reported.

Since the start of the project until March 2020, 23 PCT monthly meetings were held, being 16 presential meetings and 7 remote meetings (using platform “Skype”) and an extra meeting to discuss the impacts and procedures regarding the global pandemic that resulted on the document sent to the European Commission with the impacts in the project (see folder “Annex VI – Information about the Management Meetings held” for more information on the meetings held since the mid-term report date). The monthly meetings have been ensuring a good coordination of the team and administrative, financial and technical management of the project, with presential meetings interspersed with online meetings.

Apart from the foreseen meetings between the PCT for managing general concerns, several other meetings were held in person or over Skype, with the beneficiaries, to discuss specific difficulties felt by the beneficiaries and ensure the financial and administrative management of the project. Until the 2PR activities report, 2 meetings were held with NEEMO monitor, Sara Baceló. A third meeting, for 2020, is being discussed with the External Monitor.

The project coordination and management has been supported by the use of a web cloud (drive) where all the project administrative and financial archive has been updated and kept for consult of all involved.

The Project Coordination Team is composed by Margarida Silva (MONTIS), Alexandra Lopes (SPEA), Mariana Dias (P1A), Paula Vaz (APA-ARH Algarve), Pedro Ferreira (Playsolutions), Filipa Araújo (MTV), Rosa Coelho (MARCA ADL), Irene Nunes (RV) and Gabriel Voto (BCSD Portugal).

### C1.2. – Capacity Building and Training of Volunteer Mentors

Each beneficiary has allocated qualified staff members to monitor the tasks to be developed by the volunteers, providing the adequate training and formation to mentor the volunteers received according to the methodology adopted by each association. The support of the volunteer during their volunteering period has been a concern since the start of the project as well as the increase of diversification in the volunteer’s tasks that provide a panoply of skills they can acquire from the project. All the IVP’s include the name and background of the volunteer mentor and the conditions and tasks to be made by the volunteer during their period in the project. Medical, logistical and emotional assistance is also provided by the staff members from the organisation when necessary to the volunteers.

C1.3. – Governance and Stakeholders

It was foreseen that the Advisory Board was constituted by Confederação Portuguesa do Voluntariado - CPV, Centro Europeu de Voluntariado - CEV and Cooperativa António Sérgio para a Economia Social – CASES, ICNF – Forest and Nature Conservation Institute and RRN – the Rede Rural Nacional. The contact efforts to include more the ICNF and RRN in the project development have continued without much success regarding RRN.

ICNF has been present and made part of the presentation board of the LIFE VOLUNTEER ESCAPES Seminar “Volunteering for Nature Conservation” held on 10th September 2019 in Vila Nova de Gaia and has been involved in several activities organised by the associated beneficiaries of the project as described. ICNF has been following the work developed by SPEA in Berlengas Island and Lagoa Pequena (is this site the nature rangers were engaged in some activities). In APA ARH-Algarve, ICNF technicians from Parque Natural da Ria Formosa, Reserva Natural do Sapal de Castro Marim e Vila Real de Santo António and Parque Natural da Costa Vicentina e Sudoeste Alentejano engaged with the organisation of the events “SEIVA” and “ERVAA” in scope of the project.

MARCA as had also the participation of ICNF technicians in different activities for conservation tasks in the project intervention areas with local communities.

The partnership will continue the efforts to replace or add the RRN on the Advisory Board and continue to increase the engagement of ICNF.

The Stakeholders of the project are 126 until this moment. The Stakeholders list goes attached to the report in the folder “Annex VII - Stakeholders of the Project” inside of the folder “Technical Deliverables”.

The Stakeholders Advisory Board was received in 26/09/2018, achieving the *milestone* “First Meeting of the Stakeholders Advisory Board concluded”, foreseen for 31/01/2018. The meeting was held during the SEIVA event, organised by APA-ARH Algarve, which was open to the general public and allowed the disclosure of the project, the exchange of ideas and experiences between the project beneficiaries, the Stakeholders Advisory Board and the public.

The second meeting foreseen with the SAB was held during the 2º LIFE VOLUNTEER ESCAPES Seminar “Volunteering for Nature Conservation” in 10th September 2019 in Vila Nova de Gaia, where the stakeholders, ICNF CPV and CNE were present. The seminary was open to the general public and allowed the sharing of the project and debate of the challenge’s resultant from volunteering for nature conservation.

The next two meetings foreseen with SAB are being planned, one for the Final Project Seminary and another at the end of the project.

Progress Indicators

Indicator	Foreseen in the application	2nd Progress Report
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Number of Project Progress Reports delivered on time	3	3
Number of Meetings from Project Coordination Team	18	24
Number of Meetings from Stakeholders Advisory Board	4	2
Number of Stakeholders integrating the various meeting from SAB	20	6
Number of Staff to be assigned mentor role undertaking former capacity/training workshops	100	100

## C.2 Overall Management of the ESC Volunteer Cycle

State: on going

Foreseen start date: 01/01/2018

Actual start date: 01/01/2018

Foreseen end date: 31/12/2020

Actual (or anticipated) end date: 31/12/2020

The action is elapsing as expected.

The *deliverable* “Yearly Report on ESC Deployment to the Commission”, foreseen for 31/01/2020 can be found in Annex III – Deliverables of the Project.

All the volunteers are listed on the European Solidarity Corps platform, despite that most of the volunteers were forwarded to the PASS platform instead of being recruited from it. Being at the last year of the project, the PASS platform is still not prepared to be an essential tool to recruit volunteers and share the project. The public offers for the project to be displayed at the ESC page most of the times are barred from being shown, not appearing in the main page which creates difficulties for potential volunteers in finding the offers.

The partners try that the volunteers first know about the project and then choose the partners that fit in what they want or expect, depending on the type of volunteering that the volunteer chooses.

Every IVP has the tasks that the volunteer will do and this is given to the volunteer before he comes to the project. When it is possible to see that some volunteer has more interest in one subject than the other, the beneficiary tries to adjust his IVP so that the volunteers feel more comfortable and pleased. In addition to the IVP the volunteer has to sign a “Volunteering Agreement” and to this is attached the IVP. These two documents together have all the information about the organisation, volunteer, volunteering, conditions, tasks. All the Volunteering Agreements and IVP’s can be found, as was mentioned above, in the folder “Annex III - Deliverables of the Project”

One of the items of this action is the “continuous monitoring of the work conditions and assessment of accomplishment of the proposed tasks for each volunteer”. To give response to this, the partnership produced a document for the monitoring and assessment of the tasks of the volunteers is already concluded (see the folder “Annex VIII - Monitoring of the Tasks of the Volunteers”). One document for each beneficiary was concluded and it has been written for each one. It includes the days of volunteering per month, the activities that every volunteer does and the state of the indicators in that month. However, this model has been shown not to be efficient and some partners are having some difficulties in the implementation of this model as

already reported in previous reports. In the report it is attached the documents fill by each partner, in Annex VIII – Monitoring of the Tasks of the Volunteers.

The first certificate was prepared by 17/09/2018, 13 days before the foreseen in application (*milestone* “First Certificate of Participation endorsed” foreseen to 30/09/2018). To the end of March 2020, 106 certificates were produced (see the attached “Annex X – Certificates for Volunteers”) and 21 volunteers have ended before expected their volunteering period in the project LIFE VOLUNTEER ESCAPES, mainly due to professional reasons (job opportunities). However, some volunteers have also manifested their wish to leave after more than 5 months in the project, finding new motivations to other projects or opportunities, not adapting with the team dynamic changes when the volunteers of the group where they started their volunteering starts to end the volunteering period, and other reasons.

The *deliverable* “Yearly Report on ESC Deployment to the Commission -2018” with date for 31/01/2019, was completed in the foreseen date and sent to the External Monitor of the project. The *deliverable* “Yearly Report on ESC Deployment to the Commission – 2019” with date for 31/01/2020 was completed and delivered attached with the 2° Progress Report with a delay of 5 months from the foreseen. These *deliverables* are in the folder “Annex III - Deliverables of the Project”.

The project has welcomed 129 volunteers since the beginning until the time of reporting, corresponding to 54% of normal volunteers foreseen in application and 19% of joint volunteers foreseen in application taking in account the number of volunteering days instead of the number of volunteers. As explained in previous reports, due to agreement of receiving volunteers from 2 months to 12 months of volunteering, an adjustment was made to the calculation of volunteers received. The total of volunteering days per beneficiary was calculated by multiplying the number of volunteers foreseen in application by the number of months for each volunteer by an average of 21 volunteering days per month. Then the number of actual volunteering days per volunteer (recorded on the Payment Receipts and the Summary of Individual Support for Volunteer) is divided by the total number of volunteering days of the beneficiary and multiplied by 100%. The percentage of the normal and joint volunteers achieved is then obtained by the sum of all the individual percentages for the beneficiaries and divided by 9 partners.

With the new decisions regarding the joint-volunteers, some partners have already concluded or exceed (an example is MARCA ADL) the number of joint-volunteers to be welcomed into the project.

### Progress Indicators

<b>Indicator</b>	<b>Foreseen in the application</b>	<b>2nd Progress Report</b>
Number of yearly reports submitted	3	2
Number of ESC Volunteers giving up after hosting	0	19
% of ESC Volunteers signing a contract for the tasks being offered	100	100
% of ESC Volunteers issued a Certificate of Participation by MONTIS and Associated Beneficiaries	100	82
% of ESC Volunteers acquiring new competencies	100	100

and skills, useful for nature conservation		
% of ESC Volunteers fully satisfied with their deployment	100	In evaluation

### C.3 External Audit

State: on going

Foreseen start date: 01/04/2018

Actual start date: 20/03/2018

Foreseen end date: 31/03/2021

Actual (or anticipated) end date: 31/03/2021

On the 31<sup>st</sup> of July 2019, was signed an agreement (see Annex IX - External Audit) between MONTIS (as Coordinator Beneficiary of the project) and LCA – Leal, Carreira & Associados SROC LDA (as Auditor) to provide an independent report of factual findings on a Financial Statement prepared by MONTIS and to report in connection with the European Union financed grant agreement concerning LIFE VOLUNTEER ESCAPES (LIFE17 ESC/PT/003) according to the foreseen in application on Annex X of the Grant Agreement (“Financial and Administratives Guidelines”).

The Audit Report is expected to be delivered by 31/03/2021 as foreseen.

Due to the delay with the hiring of the External Audit team the *milestone* “First documents verified by External Audit” foreseen for 30/09/2018 was consequently delayed. It is expected that this verification will be done by mid-2020.

#### Progress Indicators

Indicator	Foreseen in the application	2nd Progress Report
% of Project’s expenditure verified by external audit	100	0
% of Project’s expenditure certified in respect to the General Conditions of the Model LIFE Grant Agreement	100	0

### C.4 Monitoring project outputs and impact in LIFE performance Indicators and the local socio-economy

State: on going

Foreseen start date: 01/01/2018

Actual start date: 01/01/2018

Foreseen end date: 31/12/2021

Actual (or anticipated) end date: 31/12/2021

The action is running as expected.

These indicators are being filled since the start of the project, being described by action in the previous chapters. As foreseen, the indicators will be delivered at the end of the project, at 31/12/2020.

The socio-economic indicators are already produced by the partnership, two meetings regarding the indicators have been held since the last reporting period to improve and discuss a few questions that have arisen between the beneficiaries when filling the table.

The social indicators have been divided into 4 dimensions that include citizenship, for number of people that engaged in activities in scope of the project; Communication to evaluate the impact on social media and other media channels of the project actions; Partnerships, including the collaborations and new partnerships that developed with the project and volunteering to measure the results regarding the ESC volunteers involved with the project.

As for the economic indicators the partnership has decided to divide them into 3 dimensions including, intervention on the territory that measures the results of the actions from A.5 to A.11 of the conservation works made on the field; Enrolment of enterprises to analyse the impact on local economy and Employment for the impact of job positions related to the project actions and development. It was made one guideline document and one Excel for the registration of the indicators (see “Annex XI - Socio-economic Indicators” for more information).

**C.5 Drafting and delivering the After-LIFE Plan**

State: to start

Foreseen start date: 01/07/2020

Actual start date: 01/07/2020

Foreseen end date: 31/12/2020

Actual (or anticipated) end date: 31/12/2020

The action is still to start.

As foreseen in the project application this action will be developed in the last 6 months of the project. However, the beneficiaries have discussed the sustainability, replicability, transfer and policy issues resulting on a short assessment on how the results of the project will continue after the project end-date and the impact of the project so far. These matters will be discussed under item 5.3 Impact of this report.

Progress indicators

<b>Indicator</b>	<b>Foreseen in the application</b>	<b>2nd Progress Report</b>
After-LIFE Plan Delivered	1	0

**5.2. Envisaged progress until next report**

The next report expected is the last report of the project that would include the goals and achievements of the last two/three years. However, due to the COVID-19 outbreak, the partnership has felt some impacts and effects on the elapsing of the Actions, namely on the reception of new volunteers, development of activities and also on the filming of the project TV series (Action B.3). The episodes described under B.3 action are already produced but the gathering of the information needed from the remaining beneficiaries has currently an unknown date foreseen (expected to restart around July 2020).

The situation has translated into a less possible scenario for the beneficiaries to achieve what is foreseen in application regarding the number of volunteers welcomed, despite the efforts made by the beneficiaries until now to achieve the foreseen in application

Hence, it is difficult at this point to describe how the development of the different tasks or entities and the achievement of the *milestones* will be progressing. However, the partnership has discussed the extension of the project actions until the end of the project (December 2020) in order proceed with the volunteering work for nature conservation and achieve as









new Environmental Youth Volunteering projects, activities with local schools, associations and enterprises. The events and dissemination materials produced with the project will allow a reach to a greater number of people awoken to this problem, enabling them to come and collaborate with associations or to replicate the actions.

Regarding the working areas, most of the project partners such as MONTIS, MARCA, MTV or P1A usually assume a commitment to develop works in the same plots for a specific amount of years (for example in Montis the management protocols are made for 10 years) with the possibility of renewal the partnerships. For P1A, Sintra-Cascais region is the main working base to promote volunteering and fieldwork for the association where some of the long-term partnerships already exist before the program and will be kept after it, namely with ICNF. Other partners where involved for the program as Parques de Sintra-Monte da Lua and Sintra Municipality allowing works in new plots inside the parks and more technical support to the field.

Throughout the running of the project SPEA has also involved different entities in the management of the sites, such as ICNF and the Municipality of Peniche for Berlengas, developed several new teaching resources with the help of the volunteers which will integrate the Educational Project and guided tours in EILP.

#### 5.4. Outside LIFE

During the elapsing of the project and the time of reporting, some the beneficiaries have engaged with other projects within their association where the ESC volunteers were involved. MONTIS has developed two projects, “Fundo Recomeçar” focused on volunteering activities for nature conservation in lands regenerating after the 2017 Portugal wildfires, and with which the ESC volunteers engaged by performing most of the tasks on the sites assigned for the project and increasing the indicators of action A.6 as well as monitoring and helping guiding the activities. The other project also implemented “Era necessário trazer fogo e alimento”, with the main purpose of relating the influence of our food choices with the landscape and biodiversity that surrounds us. Throughout this project, the ESC volunteers in MONTIS engaged in the Landscape and cooking workshops, seminars, and specially with the organising of the 2019 International Workcamp where they have helped with the works foreseen for the activity and engaged with the participants and workshops planned.

Several beneficiaries of the partnership, have relied on volunteering programs since before the VESC, such as P1A that very well developed corporate volunteering program, SPEA that receives EVS volunteers regularly and interns, promoting the experience exchange between the volunteers from all projects in the association, or MARCA ADL that also has regularly on course diverse projects (from EVS or Erasmus + for example) that whenever possible seek to relate social and environmental areas.

For these beneficiaries that work almost practically with volunteers for conservation, the project has revealed to be a new tool that have enriched the volunteering work in each beneficiary, allowing the transfer of acquiring skills and experiences between the project volunteers and external volunteers.

In MONTIS for example, ESC volunteers are easily considered “monitors” of activities, providing guidance to external volunteers, understanding the main objectives of the association in terms of nature conservation, the management tasks given to them and transmitting this knowledge.

The project has opened through networking many opportunities with other associations that work with volunteering. MONTIS for example, became a partner in two project applications related to nature conservation, one already reported under Action B.4 with the Latvian Fund for Nature and also another Youth Exchange project with a new partner association in Spain for volunteering in nature focused in managing wildfires.

## 6. Financial part

### 6.1. Costs incurred (summary by cost category and relevant comments)

Fill in the following table concerning the incurred project costs:

Budget breakdown categories	Budgeted costs in €*	Costs incurred from the start date to 31/12/2019 in €	% of Budget**
<b>1. Personnel</b>	693 760,00	489 956,77	71
<b>2. Travel and subsistence</b>	98 951,00	32697,44	33
<b>3. External assistance</b>	102 516,00	26276,99	26
<b>4. Consumables</b>	75 046,00	41 363,57	55
<b>5. Other costs</b>	70 661,00	42397	30
<b>6A. Costs for volunteers (60%)</b>	15 675,00	1 964,75	13
<b>6B. Individual OR organisational support for volunteers (75%)</b>	586 495,00	246 980,0	42
<b>8. Overheads</b>	108 798,00	54263,47,95	50
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1 751 902,00</b>	<b>958654,66</b>	<b>52</b>

The overall costs of the project are at 52% of the budget foreseen, being at two-third of the project time.

The personnel category above 50%, being that will most likely reach the 100% of the budgeted cost before the remaining categories, this due to the need of staff members to help and provide monitoring to the volunteers being more than expected. Specially with the Action A.4 to A.11 extensions until December 2020.

Given the delays on the reception of volunteers and being the “Individual OR organisational support for volunteers” the highest budgeted cost it is justified the below 50% of the overall costs of the project.

The delay on welcoming volunteers from Action A.3 and A.4 to A.11 has translated into a low percentage of the project budget with only 52% and therefore mirroring the also low percentage of budget under “Costs for volunteers” with 13% for insurance of the volunteers as the insurances seem to appear to be lower than expected. F3 “External Assistance” is currently at a 26% of execution due to some partners not using this budget as expected (as the acquired from the foreseen will not be needed and was covered by other category), for example RV and MTV as explained below, or PlaySolutions which is only at 36% of the F3 category execution due to the delay in Action B.3

Some beneficiaries had small changes in budget categories that are to highlight. MTV had foreseen in application the acquisition of specialised services for training of volunteers under category F3 “External Assistance”, however this assistance will not be needed as the volunteers monitor is entitled to give this formation, as for MTV will transfer 7000€ of exceeding budget of the foreseen in this category (12302€) to “Consumables” category in order to acquire more autochthonous trees, other materials needed for plantations and nursery activities. P1A with the new indicator proposed for the action A8 “Number of national field trips” a new cost was not predicted in the application regarding the team travels including P1A coordinators and ESC volunteers, which is included in the category of “Travel” using budget predicted to more regular P1A regional team meetings that are not occurring with such regularity.

For the extensions foreseen of the beneficiary’s actions in the project time (until December 2020), some adjustments need to be made regarding budget transferences between beneficiaries. Before the COVID-19 situation some beneficiaries had already manifested interest in extending their action in the project to receive more volunteers to achieve the foreseen in application. However, the restrictions due to the pandemic have shown to have a higher impact than expected in project actions, and therefore the partnership has discussed the needs for an extension in every action of the project that will be affected.

At this point it is still difficult and uncertain the true impacts of the state of emergency restrictions, being only possible to give a prevision so far of the budget alterations.

P1A has foreseen that even with the extension of the Action A.8 to December 2020, the categories of “Costs with volunteers” and “Organisational support for volunteers” will have an exceed of 4692€ and 69415€ respectively. The exceeding budget could support needed budget adjustment in “Personnel” where 7200€ would be needed to cover the coordinator in P1A VPA and “Consumables” where 5900€ would be needed to acquire more autochthonous plants, plant protectors, tools and gloves.

This additional budget, would be used to cover the budget need to extend Action A.8 until December 2020. With this transfer P1A expects to achieve 69% of the foreseen in application for the reception of volunteers corresponding to 5524 volunteering days (71 volunteers and 2 joint-volunteers) and 96% of the overall financial execution of the foreseen in application. Without this transfer P1A will only be able to execute 54% of the foreseen in application for the reception of volunteers corresponding to 4443 volunteering days (55 volunteers and 2 joint-volunteers) and 66% of the overall financial execution of the foreseen in application.

SPEA expects an exceeding in the budget for the categories: “Personnel” of 13778,80€, “Travel” of 6404,14€ and “Consumables” of 13195,33€. The exceeding budget could support the welcoming of more volunteers during the following months. BCSD expects an exceeding in the budget for the categories: “External Assistance” of 2162,86€ and “Other Costs” of 1377,72€. The exceeding budget would be readjusted to allow the welcoming of more volunteers in a possible action extension, giving answer to actions A.1 and A.3.

MTV expects an exceeding in the budget for the categories: “Travel” of 4000€, “Organisational support with volunteers” of 5000€ and “Costs for volunteers” of 300€. With the extension of the project action MTV could support the welcoming of more volunteers and joint-volunteers from the foreseen in application.

Another impact that some beneficiaries have felt from the pandemic regarding the reception of new volunteers is the inflation of prices for travels between countries, which for some possible volunteers has demonstrated to be a conundrum to decide if taking part in the project or not. For this reason and in the perspective of not delaying more the reception of the volunteers and with the effort of achieving the foreseen in application, the possibility of using some exceeding budget from categories in the beneficiaries to compensate the difference between the echelon of km that corresponds to the volunteer and the real price of the travel will be considered. This difference in the travel reimbursement between the real price and the echelon given to the volunteer is expected to cover the “incomplete” echelons of previous volunteers, that for example, have left the project before the 42 minimum days and therefore not reimbursed with the total of the echelon.