



LIFE17 ESC/PT/003

Yearly Report on ESC Deployment to the Commission 2020

**Covering the volunteering activities from 01/01/2020 to
31/12/2020**

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LIFE VOLUNTEER ESCAPES

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Introductory note

This report aims to show the volunteering progress from January to December of 2020. The report refers to the deliverable “Yearly Report on ESC Deployment to the Commission – 2020” and tells the number and timing of the volunteers mobilised to date, the activities undertaken by each associated beneficiary as hosting organizations, results obtained in terms of contribution of the volunteers to nature and biodiversity conservation, level of satisfaction of the volunteers and of the organizations and definition of the priorities and conservation measures for the applicable N2000 sites, habitats and species, lessons learnt and a detailed/updated plan for the activities of the following year.

Since the beginning of the project until the end of December 2020, the partnership has received 196 volunteers, corresponding to 15815 volunteering days and reaching 66,7% of the reception of volunteers foreseen in application.

Despite these uncertain and distrustful times due to COVID-19, the partnership decided to continue receiving volunteers during 2020, in order to be able to respond to the approved application. There was an interruption in the reception of volunteers from March to June in most beneficiaries in order to assess the pandemic situation and ensure the minimum conditions of health security and in late May / June the reception of new volunteers in these beneficiaries was resumed, and the number of volunteers received as shown even higher in some beneficiaries than in the same months in the previous year.

There was a greater demand on the part of both national and international volunteers for volunteering projects, given the uncertainty and lack of volunteer / internship opportunities in other countries outside the EU, job opportunities, forced study breaks, among others. There was an initial difficulty in recruiting international volunteers, due to the closing of borders between countries, uncertainty of abandonment of families for long periods of time, anxiety about the pandemic being away from home, and mainly due to inflation in travel prices.

The partnership had several meetings that allowed it to adjust to the new reality, exchange ideas and intervention proposals, and study the project's continuity decisions. The beneficiaries made an effort to continue with nature conservation work, even with a small number of volunteers. Activities for external audiences were cancelled for all beneficiaries, during this period, and some partners managed to adapt some of the actions to a digital version, allowing to reach the indicators planned for 2020.

Even so, with all the efforts of the beneficiaries, with a greater reception of volunteers and continuity of the work foreseen in the application, it would not be possible to achieve what was planned in application until the end of 2020, and the partnership decided to prepare a request for extension of the project actions until 30 June and 2021.

The extension of the project was approved, with the intervention of only 6 beneficiaries of the 9 original beneficiaries, being that SPEA, BCSD Portugal and Rota Vicentina, will not continue their respective actions in 2021 due to incompatibility with other projects destined for this year. The rest of the partnership is working to achieve the objectives proposed in the application regarding the number of volunteers received, being that the

progress indicators for nature conservation and external volunteers involved have already been reached almost 100% by all beneficiaries.

However, the pandemic situation in Portugal is clearly worsening, with already some visible consequences in terms of impeding the performance of nature conservation works, raising volunteers, adapting digital tasks and interventions expected in the field for 2021.

Nevertheless, the partnership will continue to make the best efforts to keep answering the foreseen in application, and hopefully achieve the number of volunteers expected until June 2021.

ACTION A.4

Beneficiary responsible for implementation – BCSD

1. Number and timing of the volunteers mobilised to date

Number of expected volunteers in application	2
Expected duration of each volunteering in application	12 months (504 volunteering days total)
Number of hosted volunteers	4
Actual duration of each volunteering	1 st volunteer: Beatriz Charneco – 250 days 2 nd volunteer: Rui Sebastian 64 days 3 rd volunteer: Alexandra Braz 123 days 4 th volunteer: Ana Sofia Redes 108 months (Total of 545 volunteering days)
Number of volunteers who quit	02
Number of offers sent on the PASS platform	4
% of hosted volunteers according to time*	108% (according to time) 200% (according to number of volunteers)

2. Activities undertaken by each associated beneficiary as hosting organization

Recruitment of volunteers

BCSD Portugal has made an effort to share the volunteering offer through different platforms:

- LinkedIn: sharing posts about the project and sharing the link of the offer to the ESC portal;
- BCSD Portugal website: development of news articles about the project and about the volunteering offer;
- Emails: sending emails to different universities, different student's groups, schools and volunteering associations.

Alexandra Braz joined the project just before the pandemic. In this case, the means of fundraising were identical to those already carried out since the beginning of the project.

In the event of Alexandra's departure, which took place in an unplanned way, the offer was also shared on our communication channels and additionally, Alexandra was asked

to identify potential volunteers in her network of contacts to join the project. Thus, the effort of hiring and induction was reduced, so the volunteer Ana Sofia Redes was selected and trained in a short time. The short time of this effort was essential as there were sessions under activities 4.4.3 and 4.4.4 scheduled.

The selection interviews of the new volunteer after Alexandra left took place online. After the selection of the volunteer Ana Sofia, the communication regarding the volunteering proposal to the selected person, as well as the explanation of the conditions offered, were made by e-mail.

Therefore, there was no disruption to the events already scheduled because of recruitment.

Management of volunteers

During 2020, BCSD had two volunteers for the period of 6 months each; the volunteers were paid 20€ per day, as predicted in the application, for food and accommodation support.

3. Results obtained in terms of contribution of the volunteers to nature and biodiversity conservation

Until the time of this report (December 2020), the volunteers have co-designed and facilitated a total of 5 good practices sharing sessions among companies and their stakeholders (A.4.3.) and 8 awareness-raising sessions for young entrepreneurs and start-ups (A.4.4.).

Regarding the good practices sharing sessions (A.4.3.), only one of them occurred on-site and on a face-to-face format, before the COVID-19 pandemic. After March, all of the sessions occurred online, via Zoom platform.

These 5 sessions reached a total of 103 participants; adding to the number of participants of the previous sessions since the beginning of the project, we had a total of 175 participants attending to the A.4.3. activities – 87,5% of the expected number (200 participants).

Due to the unforeseen cancellation of a session by our partner company for this event, which was justified by the COVID-19 pandemic, we were not able to meet the expected target of 8 A.4.3. sessions nor the expected target of 200 participants.

Regarding the awareness-raising sessions (A.4.4.), all of them occurred by means of an online format, via Zoom, as the COVID-19 pandemic had already begun.

These 8 sessions reached a total of 142 participants – 118% of the expected number in the project application for A.4.4. activities (120 participants). Therefore, we have accomplished the proposed target of 8 A.4.4. sessions and have exceeded the number of expected participants.

4. Lessons learnt

Regarding the volunteers that have quit the project, it was due to job opportunities, including one with BCSD Portugal itself. Rui Sebastian became a project officer within BCSD Portugal.

It worth mentioning that there was a greater unavailability of companies for this type of voluntary actions, since due to the pandemic they were more focused on maintaining their businesses and adapting their activities to current circumstances. Thus, contact with companies was difficult to maintain, even when they were interested in collaborating.

Moving on to the virtual, disclosure was also challenging because we always used the same means of disclosure (BCSD website and social networks); thus, we always reached the same people and since the sessions were similar to each other, it was difficult to get new assistants. The partner companies of the events did not always divulge enough according to their means. If they were face-to-face sessions, there would be a relatively safe list of subscribers; online, many signed up but ended up not attending, which made the audience's consistency unpredictable, as well as the adequacy of the disclosure effort.

On the other hand, from the volunteer's point of view, skills were acquired in terms of organizing online events, experience in acting quickly in the face of unforeseen events, better oral exposure of content, communication with companies via email / phone and the importance of persisting in this Communication.

5. Detailed/updated plan for the activities of the following year

BCSD Portugal will no continue its action on 2021.

ACTION A.5

Beneficiary responsible for implementation – Marca ADL

1. Number and timing of the volunteers mobilised to date

Number of expected volunteers in application	12
Expected duration of each volunteering in application	6 months (1512 volunteering days)
Number of hosted volunteers	15
Actual duration of each volunteering	2 months – 3 volunteers 2,5 months - 1 volunteer 3 months - 1 volunteer 3,6 months - 1 volunteer 4 months - 1 volunteer 5 months - 1 volunteer 6 months – 1 volunteer 12 months – 3 volunteers Total of 1680 volunteering days.
Number of volunteers who quit	4
Number of offers sent on the PASS platform	18
% of hosted volunteers according to time	103%

* comparison of the hosted volunteers with the expected volunteers

2. Activities undertaken by each associated beneficiary as hosting organization

Recruitment of volunteers

Marca ADL as continue the efforts to recruit volunteers throughout the various ways already report such as:

- Marca volunteers from other projects;
- Volunteering clubs and data base of Montemor-o-Novo schools;

- Volunteering calls in: Facebook, LinkedIn, Instagram;
- Youth Centres;
- ESC Platform.

Then when their experience and motivation fit on the profile that we need at that moment we launch the offers on PASS platform directly to those volunteers already interested in this volunteering. The complete description of the proposal and the official acceptance of the volunteers were made by email.

We extend the volunteering of 1 volunteer because she is motivated and she aims to finish the work that she has been developed. And we received again a volunteer that has been with us in 2019.

Management of volunteers

The volunteer receives 20€ per volunteering day, as foreseen in the application, for food and accommodation support, as well as the money for the travel from and to their home.

Every day the volunteers have a member of Marca's Staff leading and giving them formation in a work field context. Moreover, when is needed the manager of the project gave them support.

3. Results obtained in terms of contribution of the volunteers to nature and biodiversity conservation

Regarding the year of 2020, the collaboration of volunteers in the activities allowed the plantation of 854 native plants in conservation works (total of 2380 since the start of the project), the participation of 202 local volunteers with activities involving LIFE/ESC volunteers (total of 2436 since the start of the project) and involving at least 10 landowners in nature conservation activities (total of 15 since the start of the project).

Regarding conservation works, in 2020, with the volunteers that were collaborating with Marca ADL was possible to, control 0,46 ha of invasive alien species (total of 6,66 since the start of the project), improve/restore 0,17 ha of riparian habitats (total of 2,36 since the start of the project), and improve 1,42 ha of habitat protected area by the Habitats Directive giving a total of 9,02 ha improved since the start of the project.

4. Level of satisfaction of volunteers and of the organizations

The ESC volunteers have demonstrated fully satisfied with their deployment. The organizations that have collaborated with us became also satisfied with the activities that they have developed with us. Regarding the volunteers that have quit the project, it was due to job opportunities.

5. Definition of the priorities and conservation measures for the applicable N2000 sites, habitats and species

The invasive control interventions were carried out firstly in the buffer zone in areas near by the Montemor-o-Novo center, especially in the Castel and Nossa Senhora da Visitação that are monuments with a high visibility. This fact allowed us to show our methodology and its results to the population and also to the Municipality Hall that is supporting part of our work. This option aims to make easier to get authorization of the land owners of the proprieties invaded by acacia species in Natura 2000 sites and help us to involve some groups of volunteers that will help us in this kind of works.

Secondly the invasive control interventions were carried out in Monfurado SIC and in Cabrela SIC, as well as the monitorization of the areas previously controlled. We also continued the interventions and the monitorization of Monfurado SIC, Cabrela SIC and its buffer zones, giving priority to areas that have a lower density, an easier access and already authorized.

Other activities such as the plantations or sowings were executed according to the success of the invasive control in each area. Each year we monitored the success of the plantation and we replant the dead plants. The maintenance of the nursery has been carried out in a regular work, in order to guaranty the survival of the plants.

6. Lessons learnt

Because of the lockdown in 2020 we have not received so many volunteers as we have done in the previous years or made many activities with big groups of people. That has resulted in a lower area of invasive species control interventions and consequently a lower area of improved protected habitat.

We needed to reorganize the field work according to the maximum of persons that were allowed to travel in our van, following the recommendations of the general health department of Portugal. Then we needed to give more tasks that the volunteers could work on teleworking, such as bibliographic search about wild plants that in the future can be published or communicated as a look after some of the protected habitats.

7. Detailed/updated plan for the activities of the following year

Operational plots	Activities of the ESC Volunteers for 2021
Nursery	Reproduction of native plants (January - June) Collection of fruits and seeds (May –June) Support in the operational tasks of the nursery (January - June) Raising awareness actions regarding nature conservation (January - June)

Rivers	<p>Maintenance work of the intervention areas (January - June)</p> <p>Control of invasive alien species (March – June)</p> <p>Implementation of natural engineering techniques (January - February)</p> <p>Plantation of native species (January - February)</p> <p>Involvement of the community in conservation actions (January - June)</p> <p>Raising awareness actions regarding nature conservation (January - June)</p>
Bufer Zone (eg. Castelo de Montemor-o-Novo, N ^a Sra. Visitação)	<p>Maintenance work of the planted areas (January - June)</p> <p>Control of invasive alien species (January - June)</p> <p>Involvement of the community in conservation actions (January - June)</p>
SIC Monfurado (Natura 2000 sites)	<p>Control of invasive alien species (March– June)</p> <p>Maintenance work of the planted areas (January - June)</p> <p>Collection of seeds for reproduction in the nursery (May - June)</p> <p>Involvement of the community in conservation actions (January - June)</p> <p>Raising awareness actions regarding nature conservation (January - June)</p>
SIC Cabrela (Natura 2000 sites)	<p>Control of invasive alien species (March– June)</p> <p>Maintenance work of the planted areas (January - June)</p> <p>Collection of seeds for reproduction in the nursery (May - June)</p> <p>Involvement of the community in conservation actions (January - June)</p> <p>Raising awareness actions regarding nature conservation (January - June)</p>

ACTION A.6

Beneficiary responsible for implementation – MONTIS

1. Number and timing of the volunteers mobilised to date

Number of expected volunteers in application	30
Expected duration of each volunteering in application	6 months
Number of hosted volunteers	51
Actual duration of each volunteering	2 months – 14 volunteers 3 months – 12 volunteers 4 months – 6 volunteers 5 months – 3 volunteers 6 months – 2 volunteers 7 months – 3 volunteers 8 months – 2 volunteers 9 months – 5 volunteers 11 months – 1 volunteer Total of 3635 volunteering days
Number of volunteers who quit	6
Number of offers sent on the PASS platform	51
% of hosted volunteers according to time	53%

* comparison of the hosted volunteers with the expected volunteers

2. Activities undertaken by each associated beneficiary as hosting organization

Recruitment of the volunteers

MONTIS continues to make an effort to receive national and international volunteers in the project. Since the last Yearly Report, the association hosted 25 more volunteers including 2 joint-volunteers, with SPEA and Plantar uma Árvore.

The recruitment of volunteers continues to happen through the platforms available and previously used, such as:

- European Solidarity Corps platform with open offers;
- PASS platform with direct contacts to potential volunteers;
- Direct contact with volunteers that have expressed interest in the project before but did not engage at the time;
- Contact with volunteering websites and databases;
- Contact with universities, schools and youth groups;
- Contact with members of MONTIS;
- Social media: MONTIS facebook, Instagram and LinkedIn, LIFE VOLUNTEER ESCAPES facebook and website, volunteering facebook groups;

We started 2020 with the transition of 6 volunteers from 2019, and the entry of 6 more new volunteers. It was planned to receive a second team of volunteers, which would compensate the departure of the previous ones, for April / May, but due to the pandemic and confinement the entry of this new team was postponed. From the 12 volunteers' group, 9 have extended their volunteering contract during the lockdown (March to June), choosing to stay in MONTIS, helping with the conservation tasks before it was safe to go back to their residency countries, or even due to the uncertainty regarding other opportunities during these months.

During the months of confinement, contacts with the deferred volunteers continued in order to maintain interest by giving priority to receiving them as soon as possible. With the possibility of receiving new volunteers at the end of May / June, with the necessary health security measures, recruitment contacts for new volunteers were resumed as soon as possible.

Unfortunately, the ESC platform continued to demonstrate that it is not an effective tool in recruiting new volunteers through open volunteer offers on the platform for the project. These offers do not appear on the ESC's main page, limiting their reach to potential volunteers, and instead of instant volunteer contact it is dispersed during the months. Nevertheless, offers were launched during the confinement period on the platform for recruiting volunteers and a specific effort was made on direct contact with potential ESC volunteers, contacts of the project volunteers themselves with colleagues who may be interested, contacts with universities and other platforms volunteering and volunteer groups on social networks.

It should be noted that the work of the project's volunteers in this recruitment effort was crucial to be able to welcome 24 new volunteers even taking into account the current pandemic. 5 of the volunteers welcomed during 2020, were raised thanks to youth volunteering groups that collaborate with MONTIS in activities with LIFE VOLUNTEER ESCAPES volunteers and also through contacts with universities, another

6 volunteers learned about the project due to their close relationship with our volunteers (friends) and 10 volunteers were raised through the ESC platform.

One of MONTIS volunteers during 2020 became a joint volunteer with SPEA, willing to learn about other methods of nature conservation and the operation of another association and MONTIS also received, in late 2020, another joint volunteer from the partner Plantar uma Árvore, who also wanted to come to know the reality of another nature conservation association and extend her volunteering period.

As a nature conservation association, MONTIS is often approached by people interested in interning / volunteering or working in the association. Whenever possible and if within the requirements of LIFE, the LIFE project is presented to these contacts, conditions of the same and MONTIS 'willingness to receive them as volunteers, 2 volunteers were recruited through this model only during 2020.

During 2020, MONTIS had two accommodations available for volunteers, in order to allow the reception of more volunteers at the same time. The division of these teams by accommodation also facilitated the progress in conservation work in the various areas of intervention.

For 2021, we will have a third accommodation available allowing to extend the number of volunteers received simultaneously and the hiring of a second volunteer coordinator in order to lead and support the teams on the ground.

Management of volunteers

The hosted volunteers by MONTIS receive 15€ for food costs daily instead of 20€. The 5€ withdrawn from the total of 20€ by the association is used to pay the expenses of the accommodation rented for the ESC volunteer. The technical team provides transport to the volunteers from and to the operational plots, sometimes supported by volunteers with their own car.

MONTIS continued to plan the volunteer work according to the volunteer profile having in account the projects indicators for nature conservation and the volunteer's interest. The conservation actions developed by the volunteers are also planned according to action A.2 plans, and with the necessary readjustments resulting from the action plans developed for each of the properties under MONTIS management.

The activities plan is made on a monthly basis, according to the conservation needs designated for each property by MONTIS technicians, for example, during winter season and therefore plantation season, the main activity is plantations in properties targeted for this action (eg. baldio de Carvalhais). The explanation and interpretation of the planning are given through weekly meetings between MONTIS volunteer coordinator and the volunteers and also on a daily basis with the volunteer's coordinator in the field as well as the necessary training for each task. The volunteer's coordinator with help from the volunteers, monthly records and update of the area intervened by the volunteers in the properties unless the tasks are for example plantations which are recorded on daily basis for a better control of trees planted.

3. Results obtained in terms of contribution of the volunteers to nature and biodiversity conservation

Until now, 9,14 ha of area of IAS controlled were intervened by the ESC volunteers, as well as 19154 autochthonous trees planted in the intervention areas. The volunteers have also created 70 erosion control devices in water lines with natural engineering some of which were done in natural engineering workshops that provided a good improvement for the volunteers regarding this task.

27,48 ha of Area of Habitats protected by the habitats directive were improved with the ESC volunteers conservation tasks.

Office tasks were also very present in volunteering periods in 2020 due to the pandemic. Volunteers focused on organizing biodiversity records, monitoring plans, developing communication plans to publicize their work on the project, developing personal projects that will help in the future to assess conservation progress in the intervention areas, among many others.

During 2020, MONTIS' volunteers have visited and contributed with a day of volunteering in the partners Municipio de Torres-Vedras and APA ARH-Algarve. Plantar uma Árvore Alvão has also joined MONTIS for a week of joint-plantation efforts in the property of Baldio de Carvalhais, allowing for the volunteers from both teams to share experiences and have a different week in the field.

4. Level of satisfaction of volunteers and of the organizations

During 2020, the volunteers seem to be enjoying the volunteering, specially during these uncertain times, and most of them have requested an extension to their volunteering period. These year there was no volunteers quitting the project. We have experience an increase of the search of the project from friends of volunteers that have been welcomed, which demonstrates a good share of the experiences lived.

Also, for 2021, we are scheduled to welcome again at least 2 volunteers that have been in MONTIS has part of the LIFE VOLUNTEER ESCAPES before and have been so captivated by the work they developed in the project that have decided to come back and be part of it for longer.

Regarding MONTIS, the project has allowed to boost and improve the different tasks and activities of the association. The volunteers have been a very crucial resource to manage the properties and work on the conservation of all the intervention areas, they have demonstrated to be very reliable in 2020, understanding with the circumstances of the pandemic, and wanting to do more and better for nature conservation.

5. Definition of the priorities and conservation measures for the applicable N2000 sites, habitats and species

The conservation priorities and conservation measures for the project's intervention areas in MONTIS have not suffered many changes since 2018, although it is worth mentioning the work in the property of Cerdeirinha, not previously reported, and also the adding of:

- One property in Vouzela: Levides, where the volunteers during 2020 have worked to support the natural regeneration of the oaks of this area;
- Six new properties in Pampilhosa da Serra, acquired by MONTIS in 2019, and where the volunteers have helped already with its management and where in 2021 the association plans on setting a third volunteer team.

The habitats continue to be improved regarding the increase of biodiversity levels in the properties and autochthonous trees.

Baldio de Carvalhais

This plot makes part of the Natura 2000, SIC "Serras da Freita e Arada" (PTCON0047), including Iberian wolf (*Canis lupus signatus*) habitats. MONTIS management activities that have been developed with the ESC volunteers aim on the increase of the biodiversity levels of the property. The volunteers have done:

- Natural engineering techniques, mainly wood palisades and stone gabions to the retention of sediments and increase of soil area.
- Maintenance and opening of accesses to support the remaining management actions
- Follow up of prescribed fire actions and support to the action's preparation, mainly opening paths and accesses
- Plantations of autochthonous trees
- Direct seeding of autochthonous species
- Registration of biodiversity data and upload to the collaborative platform iNaturalist
- Install and maintenance of jay trays. The task boost seeds natural dispersion by relying on the stockist behaviour of jays (*Garrulus glandarius*) by providing seeds.
- Maintenance of trees planted in previous plantations season
- Assessment of the landscape/vegetation evolution

Carvalhal de Vermilhas

The Carvalhal de Vermilhas property is included in Parque Natural Local Vouga-Caramulo. The property was characterised for being a juvenile oakland which burnt in the Autumn of 2017. The volunteers have:

- Pruning of trees to boost the natural regeneration after wildfires by choosing one of the healthier stems and pruning the remaining, this way concentrating the root energy on the chosen stems boosting its growth
- Maintenance and opening of accesses for the support of the remaining management actions

- Watercourses systematization to increase the infiltration and water availability in the property
- Install and maintenance of jay trays. The task boost seeds natural dispersion by relying on the stockist behaviour of jays (*Garrulus glandarius*) by providing seeds.
- Registration of biodiversity data and upload to the collaborative platform iNaturalist

Baldio da Granja

Baldio da Granja burnt during the Autumn of 2017. The main issue that the property faces is the presence of invasive alien flora. Thus, the volunteers have developed the following tasks:

- Invasive Alien Species control (IAS control) (*Acacia dealbata*)
- Registration of biodiversity data and upload to the collaborative platform iNaturalist
- Pruning of trees to boost the natural regeneration after wildfires by choosing one of the healthier stems and pruning the remaining, this way concentrating the root energy on the chosen stems boosting its growth.
- Maintenance and opening of accesses for the support of the remaining management actions

Costa Bacelo

Costa Bacelo property makes part of Natura 2000, SIC SCI “Rio Paiva” (PTCON0059). In the plot, until this moment, the volunteers developed the following tasks:

- Invasive Alien Species control (IAS control) (*Acacia dealbata* and *Hakea sericea*)
- Registration of biodiversity data and upload to the collaborative platform iNaturalist
- Maintenance and opening of accesses for the support of the remaining management actions
- Rehabilitation and restauration of forest and riparian habitats

Vieiro

The operational plot makes part of the Natura 2000 - SIC “Serras da Freita e Arada” (PTCON0047). In this property, the volunteers developed the following tasks:

- Invasive Alien Species control (IAS control) (*Acacia dealbata* and *Hakea sericea*.)
- Plantations of autochthonous trees
- Registration of biodiversity data and upload to the collaborative platform iNaturalist
- Maintenance and opening of accesses for the support of the remaining management actions

- Install and maintenance of jay trays. The task boost seeds natural dispersion by relying on the stockist behaviour of jays (*Garrulus glandarius*) by providing seeds.
- Natural engineering techniques, mainly wood palisades and stone gabions to the retention of sediments and increase of soil area.
- Rehabilitation and restauration of forest and riparian habitats

Cerdeirinha

Cerdeirinha is a property located in Valadares, São Pedro do Sul, with around 3 hectares of area. The property is privately owned by a family that has requested MONTIS for a protocol of management. The area was previously dominated by oaks and cork oaks, that on a fire in 2016 have burn and open access to the installment of eucalyptus and smaller shrubs. However, the oaks and cork oaks that made part of Cerdeirinha and burn in the fire, started to regenerate from the roots after a few months, allowing the possibility of reconverting these area from a eucalyptus land to a autochtonous forest land.

The volunteers develop the following tasks:

- Pruning of trees to boost the natural regeneration after wildfires by choosing one of the healthier stems and pruning the remaining, this way concentrating the root energy on the chosen stems boosting its growth
- Maintenance and opening of accesses for the support of the remaining management actions
- Install and maintenance of jay trays. The task boost seeds natural dispersion by relying on the stockist behaviour of jays (*Garrulus glandarius*) by providing seeds.
- Registration of biodiversity data and upload to the collaborative platform iNaturalist

Levides

Levides, located in Vouzela, is an about 5 hectares property, privately own by a family that has established a management protocol with MONTIS. The area used to be a mainly pineland planted by the owner, but that as burn in wildfires the previous year, allowing the small vegetation and shrubs to prosper and grown with shade being provided to control them.

It was found after opening accesses inside the property to understand which would be the course of action, many oaks were found with potential to have their growth supported by our interventions and accelerate the instalment of a forest.

The volunteers develop the following tasks:

- Pruning of trees to boost the natural regeneration after wildfires by choosing one of the healthier stems and pruning the remaining, this way concentrating the root energy on the chosen stems boosting its growth
- Maintenance and opening of accesses for the support of the remaining management actions

- Registration of biodiversity data and upload to the collaborative platform iNaturalist

Pampilhosa da Serra

MONTIS has acquired about 11ha in Pampilhosa da Serra region, 6 of the 11 ha being mainly properties dominated by small shrubs, esteva (*Cistus ladanifer*), pines (*Pinus pinaster*) and strawberry trees (*Arbutus unedo*). The other 5 of the 11 ha are mainly abandoned productions of eucalyptus trees that have no conservation or biodiversity value.

To manage these properties the volunteers have been developing the following actions:

- Pruning of trees to boost the natural regeneration in pines, creating a discontinuity between the ground vegetation and the canopy to provide some resistance to wildfires;
- Maintenance and opening of accesses for the support of the remaining management actions;
- Registration of biodiversity data and upload to the collaborative platform iNaturalist;

6. Lessons learnt

2020 was definitely a different year and brought with it many challenges regarding volunteer management. During this time, it was need to readjust the tasks to the best interest of health security of the volunteers, and the team management to create a safe enough environment that would allow the project to continue being a good experience for the volunteers.

The coordinators had the opportunity to create a closer relationship with the volunteers, allowing them to create greater emotional stability during the uncertainty of the pandemic, to manage conflicts between volunteers with different ways of dealing with the pressure of this period. This approach also made it possible to adjust the management of the volunteers in terms of motivation and expectations.

Throughout the project it has been noted that one of the criticisms of volunteers when they leave volunteering is the repetition of tasks that makes work monotonous. Although this issue was explained to them during recruitment, and that the association works on the basis of supporting natural processes and that this implies focusing management at certain times of the year depending on nature (example: plantations during the winter season), routine ends up creating demotivation in the volunteers. However, during this year, with this approach of all technicians to the field work, the absence of activities, etc., allowed the volunteers to realize the importance of these condensed tasks at times of the year, and to adjust the way the work of field works by making it more dynamic (for example:

making planting teams, one plant, another opens holes, streamlining the process and also creating opportunity to share experiences in small teams during fieldwork).

A greater effort was also made at MONTIS to integrate volunteers in the active management of the association, in the organization and development of activities, communication, reports, monitoring plans, etc. tasks that normally would only be done by technicians and that the volunteers show interest and motivation to be involved, allowing a more diverse experience for them. It should be noted that all tasks were subsequently reviewed and validated by the technicians.

7. Detailed/updated plan for the activities of the following year

Operational plots	Activities of the ESC Volunteers for 2021
Baldio de Carvalhais	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Natural Engineering Techniques - Pruning of trees to boost natural regeneration - Opening and maintenance of accesses - Plantations of autochthonous trees - Direct seeding - Maintenance of jay trays - Registration of biodiversity data and upload to the collaborative platform iNaturalist
Carvalho de Vermilhas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Pruning of trees to boost natural regeneration - Maintenance and opening of accesses to support the remaining management actions - Watercourses systematization to increase the infiltration and water availability in the property - Marking of the property limit - Registration of biodiversity data and upload to the collaborative platform iNaturalist
Baldio da Granja	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Registration of biodiversity data and upload to the collaborative platform iNaturalist - Opening and maintenance of accesses - Invasive Alien Species Control - Pruning of trees to boost natural regeneration
Costa Bacao	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Rehabilitation and restauration of forest and riparian habitats - Install and maintenance of the jay tray - Invasive Alien Species Control - Registration of biodiversity data and upload to the collaborative platform iNaturalist
Vieiro	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Rehabilitation and restauration of forest and riparian habitats - Maintenance of the jay tray - Invasive Alien Species Control - Registration of biodiversity data and upload to the collaborative platform iNaturalist - Plantations of autochthonous trees
Cerdeirinha	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Pruning of trees to boost natural regeneration

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Maintenance and opening of accesses to support the remaining management actions - Registration of biodiversity data and upload to the collaborative platform iNaturalist
Levides	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Pruning of trees to boost natural regeneration - Maintenance and opening of accesses to support the remaining management actions - Registration of biodiversity data and upload to the collaborative platform iNaturalist
Pampilhosa da Serra	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Pruning of trees to boost natural regeneration - Maintenance and opening of accesses to support the remaining management actions - Registration of biodiversity data and upload to the collaborative platform iNaturalist

ACTION A.7

Beneficiary responsible for implementation – Município de Torres Vedras

1. Number and timing of the volunteers mobilised to date

Number of expected volunteers in application	12 (6 per 12 months) + 2 joint volunteers (2 per 2 months)
Expected duration of each volunteering in application	1638 volunteering days
Number of hosted volunteers	18
Actual duration of each volunteering	2 months – 1 volunteer 3 months – 1 volunteer 6 months – 1 volunteer 9 months – 3 volunteers 11 months – 2 volunteers 12 months – 2 volunteers 12, 5 months – 1 volunteer 13 months – 1 volunteer 15 months – 3 volunteers 18 months – 3 volunteers Total of 985 volunteering days
Number of volunteers who quit	3
Number of offers sent on the PASS platform	18

% of hosted volunteers according to time	60%
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* comparison of the hosted volunteers with the expected volunteers

2. Activities undertaken by each associated beneficiary as hosting organization

MTV has continued the efforts to receive more volunteers using the following platforms for recruitment:

- PASS Platform with open offers
- Emails sharing the project to secondary and professional schools from Torres Vedras
- Emails to Universities
- Social Media: Facebook page and website of Torres Vedras Municipality
- Youth centre and local volunteer bank
- Meetings with teachers from local schools

After the lockdown imposed by the epidemic situation in Portugal between March and May 2020, the Municipality was able, however, to receive 3 new volunteers and 1 volunteer who had participated in the project in 2019. The volunteers contacted the MTV to know more about the project, after being told about it from previous volunteers.

During the period of lockdown, the volunteering activities were cancelled. Regardless this striking as a central reason for volunteers to extend the volunteering period, in order to complete the minimum days, there was also some volunteers that asked to extend their contracts given the lack of other options of occupation, namely work or study.

The volunteers are paid 20€ per volunteering day, as predicted in the application, for food and accommodation support.

Management of volunteers

The volunteers perform the volunteering activities under supervision of employees of MTV, namely the technician hired for monitoring the activities and other members from the team.

In general, the volunteers are asked to attend the activities whenever they can. Since most of them are students or are working, they sometimes have time constraints and participate more sporadically. However, for most of the times the team of volunteers have a total of 4 members on a regular volunteering day.

Usually, the volunteers perform the activities together and instructions are accompanied by demonstration of the tasks to be developed.

3. Results obtained in terms of contribution of the volunteers to nature and biodiversity conservation

Regarding the year of 2020, the collaboration of volunteers in the activities allowed the:

- Plantation of 6848 autochthonous trees and shrubs, in a total of 9462 trees planted since the start of the project;
- Restoration of 0,5 ha of riparian habitats for the species *Achondrostoma occidentale*, achieving a total of 1,3 ha since the beginning of the project;
- Control of 8,3 ha of areas with invasive alien species, especially *Carpobrotus edulis* and *Acacia spp.*, in Natura2000 sites, an accumulated total of 21,3 ha;
- Engagement of 1224 local volunteers in activities involving ESC volunteers, in a total of 2551 participants since the project started.

4. Level of satisfaction of volunteers and of the organizations

The volunteers that have been involved in the project so far, seem to be satisfied with the experience. The majority of the volunteers have opted to extend the volunteering period, which supports the idea that they are pleased with the experience in the project. Most of the volunteers welcomed in the project so far are students, and 2 of the volunteers had to leave the project to dedicate more time to their studies. A third volunteer left because he was presented with a job-offer.

5. Definition of the priorities and conservation measures for the applicable N2000 sites, habitats and species

The conservation measures continue in MTV's N2000 sites, habitats and species. Natura2000 areas – Community Interest Sites of Peniche/Santa Cruz ((PTCON0056) the control of the invasive species, *Carpobrotus edulis* and plantations of autochthonous dune species continue to be the main priorities, as well as the collection of seed for production of dune plants. Also, plantations of native trees and maintenance of plantations done in previous years in Local Protected Landscape of Serras do Socorro e Archeira to ensure the success of plantations. The maintenance work to improve and restore the habitats in the riparian galleries continues to benefit the conservation of the native species Ruivaco-do-Oeste (*Achondrostoma occidentale*).

Besides the activities performed in those locations, in 2020 the MTV has defined other priorities by expanding the areas of intervention. The volunteers have been developing activities such as plantation of autochthonous trees, watering and other maintenance activities in Serra de São Julião, a property owned by the civil parish of Carvoeira e Carmões, as well as in other municipal lands. These initiatives include afforestation of areas with native species, the reforestation of areas in which eucalyptus has reached the threshold of exploitation, and the use of natural regeneration to increase biodiversity on-

site. Moreover, this intends to reduce fire hazards, enhance soil quality and reduce its erosion, and the creation of natural green areas for the community.

6. Lessons learnt

The biggest challenge in 2020 was related with the cancellation of volunteering activities during the lockdown in Portugal (March to May). In May, the volunteers returned to the activities in small groups. Throughout the year, the volunteering activities were carried out in new areas of intervention, and the welcoming of 4 new volunteers was crucial to compensate for the delays in the beginning of the year.

7. Detailed/updated plan for the activities of the following year

Operational plots	Activities of the ESC Volunteers for 2021
Dunes – coastal areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Plantation of native species; - Control of invasive alien species (<i>Carpobrotus edulis</i>).
Municipal lands	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Maintenance of plantations done in previous years; - Plantation of autochthonous trees and shrubs; - Control of invasive alien species (<i>Acacia spp.</i>, <i>Arundo donax</i>, <i>Cortaderia selloana</i>, <i>Hakea seria</i>).
Local Protected Landscape of Socorro and Archeira	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Maintenance of plantations done in previous years; - Involvement of private landowners.
Sizandro River	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Control of invasive alien species (<i>Procambarus clarkii</i>, <i>Arundo donax</i>); - Plantation of native species.
Alcabrichel River	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Control of invasive alien species (<i>Procambarus clarkii</i>, <i>Arundo donax</i>); - Plantation of native species.
Municipal nursery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Raising awareness actions regarding nature conservation; - Support in the operational tasks of the municipal nursery.
Serra de São Julião	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Maintenance of plantations done in previous years; - Plantation of native species.

ACTION A.8

Beneficiary responsible for implementation – Plantar uma Árvore

1. Number and timing of the volunteers mobilised to date

Number of expected volunteers in application	66
Expected duration of each volunteering in application	8190 volunteering days
Number of hosted volunteers	76
Actual duration of each volunteering	0,5 month – 1 volunteer 1 month – 1 volunteer 1,3 months - 1 volunteer 1,5 months – 3 volunteers 2 months – 23 volunteers 2,1 months – 2 volunteers 2,2 months – 1 volunteer 2,5 months – 5 volunteers 2,6 months – 1 volunteer 2,8 months – 1 volunteer 3 months – 8 volunteers 3,2 months – 2 volunteers 3,3 months – 1 volunteer 3,5 months – 5 volunteers 4 months – 5 volunteers 4,5 months – 2 volunteers

	4,6 months – 1 volunteer
	4,8 months – 2 volunteers
	5 months – 1 volunteer
	5,2 months – 1 volunteer
	5,4 months – 2 volunteers
	5,5 months – 1 volunteer
	6 months – 2 volunteers
	7 months – 1 volunteer
	9 months – 1 volunteer
	12 months – 3 volunteers
	Total of 5465 volunteering days
Number of volunteers who quit	6
Number of offers sent on the PASS platform	113
% of hosted volunteers according to time	68%

* comparison of the hosted volunteers with the expected volunteers

Note: on the previous early report of 2019, P1A considered 11 volunteers quitting the program and for 2020 the number was readjusted to 6 volunteers. This update considers a change of criteria to describe such situation, now including only volunteers that had finished before the minimum of two months period or that were excluded for justified reason has bad behaviour or violation of rules. The higher number of the last year was also including situations of volunteers that stayed for more than two months and had shortened the period for justified reasons as lack of adaptation, lack of motivation to stay for longer periods, job opportunities or health problems. With this distinction the number presented is more realistic, since the volunteers that had updated their periods were well succeeded accomplishing the minimum eligible.

2. Activities undertaken by each associated beneficiary as hosting organization

Like described in the previous report, P1A is keeping the same methodology to search and to select new volunteers. The recruitment of volunteers is happening through the platforms available, being the direct contacts with potential volunteers in PASS platform the method that has been most efficient but also the most time consuming. The recruitment has been done in:

- PASS platforms with direct contacts to potential volunteers;
- Social media: Facebook and website;
- E-mail
- Universities, associations and volunteering platforms;

After the volunteer application, he is contacted and the volunteering offer is detailed for them, including information about the accommodation, activities, volunteering work load, volunteering tasks, financial support, etc. After the information is given and the volunteer still shows interest, P1A will proceed to a meeting with the volunteer to agree on the terms and go through the volunteering agreement with the volunteer.

The organisation contact person, or in his/her absence other person part of the team, is also in charge to receive the volunteer, prepare the accommodation if needed, do the technical formation in theoretical and practical formats including in-door sessions, field visits and team integration.

To the volunteers, in Sintra, is given 8€ per volunteering day for food expenses, and 12€ from the originally 20€ is kept to support the expense with accommodation and expenses of the accommodation, which is provided by the association in both intervention regions. To the volunteers in Alvão if coming from other parts of Portugal or from foreign countries the support is given has referred to Sintra, but if they are locals is given the 20€ per volunteering day to cover the expenses with their own accommodation and food.

Considering the pandemic scenario, in the selection interview is also shared with the volunteer the safety measures for the team considering Covid-19 and new volunteers are asked to do the Covid-19 test before the travel.

Regarding the number of volunteers hosted, in 2020 P1A had less volunteers considering the restrictions and uncertainty scenario of Covid-19 outbreak. During the spring when the lockdown started in Portugal one rotative volunteer (Bruno Arieta) was excluded from the program due to risk behaviours and two volunteers (Ana Catarina Alves and Giacomo Sabattini) quit the program with more than two months period already done due to lack of motivation. One rotative volunteer (Daniel Almeida) quit the volunteering with Montis extending his period only in P1A. The other volunteers (Inès Voelker, Eva Andreato, Jules Trapadoux and Eve Burrows) had decided to extend their staying in the project until was possible to return home. During May the volunteering in Alvão stopped and both teams stayed in Sintra where the areas were in more need of conservation works and to promote teambuilding and a more social and supportive environment for the volunteers throughout the difficult time.

The arrival of new ones with the end of lockdown in June was challenging considering the lack of long-term planning for proposing voluntary periods and arrival logistics, due to this reason, June and July were months with less volunteers, three in Sintra and four

in Alvão. Along the year was a permanent challenge to make new contacts with volunteers that were quitting the applications due to lack of availability to plan their participation in the program right away, insecurity in travelling during the pandemic, fear of leaving the family and uncertainty regarding limitations for future university or job applications after the voluntary program.

In October, one volunteer (Valentin Antonio) of Sintra was infected being this situation detected after all team being tested to plan a field trip to one of the Azorean islands. After that, he did the isolation in another house and all Sintra volunteers were in isolation for the three weeks with regular monitoring of health symptoms. Regarding the symptoms, most of them stayed asymptomatic and only two (Harika Kolli and Emma Furniss-Roe) had some chest pain, tiredness and migraines. The return to the field was done progressively when each volunteer was without symptoms for at least three days. During this time, P1A coordination ensured the shopping and delivery of food, medicines and financial reimbursement of the voluntary days has predicted. The safety measures plan was set according the national health recommendations.

Management of volunteers

Regarding the management of volunteers, once a month there's a team meeting per region (Sintra and Alvão) with the volunteers and P1A coordinators and several things are discussed, namely the working plan for the next month, feedback of the previous month considering volunteers works and learning's and is also a moment for sharing doubts or conflicts if there are. Adding to that, daily in the field the volunteers are tutored - works for the day, how to do it, team organization, coordination of groups and so on - since the volunteers are always at least with one P1A coordinator in the field. If struggles are identified more team meetings can be done to solve it and that may happen in person or virtually by email or WhatsApp groups created per team's region.

The volunteer's free time is also considered has important, as so when possible some activities like guided tours, events or places to visit have been proposed to the volunteers during their staying.

3. Results obtained in terms of contribution of the volunteers to nature and biodiversity conservation

- Area of invasive and Alien Species Controlled: **23,34 ha**
- Autochthonous Species Planted: **22 242**
- Trees and Shrubs produced in Nursery: **3 230**
- Area of Natura 2000 Habitats Promoted: **37,54 ha**
- Length of Pedestrian Trails Maintained and/or Restored to promote the Tourism in the Natura 2000 Site: **44,30 km**
- Local Volunteers Involved with the ESC Volunteers Activities: **7 545**
- Involvement of External Partners with the ESC Volunteers Activities: **29**

Note: The indicators showing a higher progress not only reflect results from 2020 but also cumulative numbers until 2019 that by error were not well considered in the previous yearly report. These values are regarding the areas of invasive controlled and natura 2000 habitats promoted, plants planted and number of local volunteers involved in the activities. These missing values were mainly from interventions outside of Sintra-Cascais and Alvão Plots.

4. Level of satisfaction of volunteers and of the organizations

The level of volunteer's satisfaction as said in the previous report remain under evaluation but in general, they seem motivated and satisfied with the experience expressing it has quite dynamic, meaningful and capacitating. For the P1A organisation it has been a rich and productive experience with good results accomplished.

Considering all the challenges of the covid-19 pandemic scenario the volunteers have manifested a quite positive feedback feeling safe and grateful for the opportunity of being able to volunteer abroad, keeping some social dynamics and having hands-on-field learning's in a global scenario of general lack of opportunities for it in other projects or countries. Still regarding this issue, it's relevant to manifest that some of the volunteers received during 2020 decided to apply for this project after other voluntary placements being cancelled in countries like in south of America region due to the absence of intercontinental connections.

5. Definition of the priorities and conservation measures for the applicable N2000 sites, habitats and species

Like described in the previous report, P1A implantation action keeps being divided in the two sites:

- Sintra/Cascais, SCI (PTCON008), in Sintra region, with 6 plots of intervention area in the Park plus a few more outside it with occasional works, with priorities in control of invasive species, plantations of autochthonous species of trees and shrubs, maintenance of planted areas, collection of seeds for propagation in nursery and coordination of activities with other volunteers;
- Alvão/Marão, SCI (PTCON003), in Alvão region, with 4 plots of intervention area and priorities in plantation of autochthonous trees and shrubs, maintenance of planted areas, maintenance and restoration of pedestrian trails, collection of seeds for propagation in nursery and involvement of local community with environmental sensibilization activities and production of communication for local media;

Adding to that, 2020 was a year to define new strategies and partnerships for the national field trips, namely the organisation of four working camps in four Azorian islands

(Graciosa, Flores, Pico and Santa Maria islands) with the Regional Direction of Environment and regular works in a property in Vidigueira, Alentejo region with a private landowner.

The camps in Azores promoted the exchange of voluntary experience between the works of P1A in the mainland and the regional government; the networking with other life program (Life IP Azores Natura); the opportunity to meet other ecological contexts in the regional natural parks, to promote voluntary activities with local groups and to establish bigger field working teams including P1A coordinators, regional rangers and technicians, VE volunteers and Azorean youngsters. These trips had included Sintra and Alvão teams.

In Vidigueira property, an annual working plan was set with the landowner considering monthly works regarding plantation and maintenance seasons. Since the land is located in an arid region, ecological degraded and the owner lives far away the regular works of Sintra team have been essential to achieve consistent results to restore a native wood and future wildlife hotspot in a rural region of vineyards and olive orchards.

In 2020, regular works were also reinforced on Barreiro Local Natural Reserve with Barreiro municipality (and in scope of the project LIFE Biodiscoveries), regarding the removal of exotic alien species (*Acacia sp.*) and reforestation with natives.

With less regularity, a few national fieldtrips were done to work in partnership with Montis (one trip) and Marca (one trip) and also to Bussaco National Wood in Luso (two trips).

6. Lessons learnt

2020 was a year of challenges mainly considering the pandemic limitations. During the lockdown the activities with groups stopped and the impact of the works was depending only on Sintra and Alvão teams and even after that the involvement of participants was only partially recovered with small community groups and a few enterprises. With less human resources the maintenance in the field got delayed, fewer plantations were done and scarce opportunities to coordinate voluntary groups were possible. Adding to that, the support of the forestall rangers in Sintra-Cascais Natural Park for mechanic interventions as shredding infesting bushes and removal of wood load was postponed, having a big impact on the work schedule.

However, an active search was made to find alternative solutions to maintain the best possible results in view of the current reality. To name a few: with the lack of voluntary groups in the field, the team was reinforced with more P1A coordinators; the priority and scale of work in the different areas was readjusted considering the smaller teams; the field trips were made where there were better security conditions to accommodate the team and priority works to be carried out. Despite the challenges, it was a year well succeed of adaptation, persistence and brought the potential to create new work dynamics, promote new learning's and unity in the teams.

7. Detailed/updated plan for the activities of the following year

Operational plots	Activities of the ESC Volunteers for 2021
Sintra-Cascais Natural Park	<p>New plantations, monitoring of plant survival and replace of dead ones from previous seasons, consolidation of previous maintenances regarding control of invasive alien and native infesting species in previous intervened limits of the plots (i.e. weeding of remaining bank seed of acacias, pittosporums and hakeas, debark of adult acacias, cut and removal of dead invasive trees, and uprooting and composting piles of blackberries), identification and protection of natural native regeneration and expanding of the same interventions to new limits in the parcels. Same kind of works in the pedestrian trails.</p> <p>Coordination of voluntary groups of community and enterprises.</p> <p>Nursery maintenance, germination and growing monitoring.</p>
Alvão Mountains	<p>New plantations, monitoring of plant survival and replace of dead ones from previous seasons, consolidation of previous maintenances regarding control of invasive alien and native infesting species in previous intervened limits of the plots (i.e. weeding of remaining bank seed of acacias, debark of adult acacias, cut and removal of dead invasive trees, and uprooting and composting piles of blackberries), identification and protection of natural native regeneration and expanding of the same interventions to new limits in the parcels.</p> <p>Coordination of voluntary groups of enterprises.</p> <p>Nursery maintenance, germination and growing monitoring.</p> <p>Development of new communication articles for the local newspaper.</p>

Beyond both plots, more national fieldtrips are planned to both teams to the Azorean islands, to the private property in Vidigueira and Bussaco's National Wood. Adding to this, more working days may happen in Local Natural Reserve of Barreiro with Sintra team.

ACTION A.9

Beneficiary responsible for implementation – Rota Vicentina

1. Number and timing of the volunteers mobilised to date

Number of expected volunteers in application	6
Expected duration of each volunteering in application	504 volunteering days (counting joint volunteers)
Number of hosted volunteers	4
Actual duration of each volunteering	4 months – 1 volunteer 3 months – 1 volunteer 2 months – 2 volunteers Total of 227 volunteering days
Number of volunteers who quit	0
Number of offers sent on the PASS platform	4
% of hosted volunteers according to time	45%

* comparison of the hosted volunteers with the expected volunteers

2. Activities undertaken by each associated beneficiary as hosting organization

The recruitment of volunteers was made especially using social media pages, RV's website, Facebook and Instagram pages. The volunteers that contacted Rota Vicentina were informed on further details of the planned project activities and the financial conditions. If they still were interested to apply, they were asked to send a CV and motivation letter. The applications received were evaluated and interviews were made. After that, the volunteers received their invitation to access the PASS platform.

Despite the constraints caused by the pandemic situation and the difficulty finding new volunteers during this time and to remote areas, Rota Vicentina received two volunteering in Spring and two in Autumn, being the last one's volunteers that have engaged with the project before in 2019.

The volunteers welcomed to the project receive 20€ per volunteering day for accommodation and food expenses.

3. Results obtained in terms of contribution of the volunteers to nature and biodiversity conservation

The collaboration of the volunteers in Rota Vicentina this year have contributed for:

- 202,5 km of Rota Vicentina walking trails maintained or restored;
- 1 remote volunteering platform created
- 1 campaign which involves local people to monitor and maintain walking trails;
- Walking trails data and documents review;
- Awareness information creation (image + copy) for social networks;
- Review of the area of IAS controlled in 2019 yearly review;
- Awareness activities and trainings about invasive species.

4. Level of satisfaction of volunteers and of the organizations

Taking into account the context (COVID 19 and confinement with precautionary rules), the volunteer tasks had to be adjusted, so it was harder to provide tasks that were engaging, motivational and satisfying for them. However, the volunteers finished their volunteering period satisfied with the work done in this country region and its conservation efforts.

5. Definition of the priorities and conservation measures for the applicable N2000 sites, habitats and species

“Costa Sudoeste” (SCI, PTCON0012, and SPA, PTZPE0015), priority works rely on control of invasive alien species, especially *Acacia sp.* and *Carpobrotus edulis*, maintenance of trails and maintenance of the areas already controlled of invasive species.

6. Lessons learnt

The rural context difficults the attraction of volunteers, especially in Winter, as initially planned. Rota Vicentina is used to work with volunteers for a day or for a year; an intermediate duration requires more rigorous time management. In the end, when the volunteer work is going very well, the duration seems too short.

The contribution of these volunteers for the conservation and the local population involvement is invaluable.

7. Detailed/updated plan for the activities of the following year

Rota Vicentina will no continue its action on 2021.

ACTION A.10

Beneficiary responsible for implementation – SPEA

1. Number and timing of the volunteers mobilised to date

Number of expected volunteers in application	23 “normal” + 2 “joint” = 25
Expected duration of each volunteering in application	2898 volunteering days: 21 volunteers - 6 months each 4 volunteers - 3 months each
Number of hosted volunteers	19 “normal” + 2 “joint” = 21
Actual duration of each volunteering	2323 volunteering days: 1 volunteer – 2 months 7 volunteers – 3 months 1 volunteer – 4 months 3 volunteers – 5 months 6 volunteers – 6 months 1 volunteer – 10 months 2 volunteers – 11 months
Number of volunteers who quit	1 (joint with Montis) – quit 1 month before the ending period
Number of offers sent on the PASS platform	21
% of hosted volunteers according to time	80%

* comparison of the hosted volunteers with the expected volunteers

2. Activities undertaken by each associated beneficiary as hosting organization

Recruitment of volunteers

For 2020 there were volunteer places for the 3 sites: Berlengas, Azores and Lagoa Pequena. For Berlengas, the selection occurred in the last months of 2019, as the work was supposed to begin in January 2020.

The recruitment of volunteers in SPEA for 2020 has been involving:

- Sharing the project in SPEA website
- Advertise the offers in Project website
- Advertise the offers in European Solidarity Corps website
- Social media: Facebook

Management of the volunteers

Berlenga:

For Berlenga we expected to receive 3 volunteers for 6 months, but all of them extended their volunteering period to 10 and 11 months. We also received 1 joint volunteer for 2 months with MONTIS. During the confinement period, the volunteers did not interrupt their work because we adapted their tasks with jobs that they could do from home (ex. reports, data analysis, etc.).

In the first two months of 2020 the volunteers and the tutor were working together at the SPEA office in Lisbon. This allowed a direct and daily follow-up of the tasks developed. Since the pandemic situation began and everyone started working from home, there were regular online meetings and phone calls to allow the exchange of ideas and clarification of doubts on a regular basis, as well as constant learning.

Besides these online meetings the fieldwork was only suspended in March and April and so, at least two weeks per month, the volunteers were in direct contact with the rest of the SPEA team.

A digital agenda was also elaborated for 2020 to organise the fieldwork in Berlenga Island. This agenda included all foreseen tasks allowing the volunteers to know exactly what tasks they will develop in each month. Initially the agenda was planned up to July but then, as there was the possibility to extend the volunteering period, we completed the agenda up to the end of the year.

As the volunteers also had the opportunity to help in the fieldwork of another LIFE project (LIFE18 NAT/PT/000927 – LIFE Ilhas Barreira), we also prepared a digital agenda for tasks developed under this project.

When based in Lisbon, the volunteers received 20€ per volunteering day for accommodation and food expenses. When in Berlenga island, SPEA ensured the accommodation and food expenses, and therefore the volunteer received only 10€ per volunteering day, for personal expenses.

Azores:

We expected to receive 6 volunteers between April and September. Several volunteers applied and we selected 3 in the first stage. Due to the Covid-19 outbreak it was not possible to welcome these volunteers. The situation was expected to begin to normalize in July. The arrival of the volunteers, at best, would take place from mid-July to September (just over 2 months) and most of the work planned were not possible to perform anymore as the tasks planned were “time of the year” dependent. Apart from this, SPEA team on the ground was working with strong limitations, to ensure safety rules, namely in the number of elements per team and in the use of vehicles. In view of the delay in work due to Covid, the priority was for the team to ensure other essential functions not related with LIFE Volunteer Escapes.

Thus, it was not possible, due to these limitations, to receive volunteers in Azores site in 2020.

Espaço Interpretativo da Lagoa Pequena

For 2020 we expected to receive 2 volunteers (1 for 4 months between February and June; and 1 for 3 months between June and September). Due to Covid19, the 1st volunteer had to stop working in April and restarted in August until October. Due to the new restrictions imposed regarding the pandemic, mainly regarding the use of working and public space, cancelled activities, and the reduced amount of tasks to perform, it was not possible to receive more than one volunteer during this period.

At the beginning of each week, an informal meeting was held between the tutor and the volunteer. In this meeting, the tasks carried out in the previous week were recapitulated and recorded. At the same meeting, objectives for the week beginning were established. During the general home quarantine period in Portugal, when working from home, whenever relevant, there were telephone contacts, sometimes several times a day. Volunteer had access to EILP's GoogleCalendar, with all relevant events (ex. activities, guided tours, etc.).

3. Results obtained in terms of contribution of the volunteers to nature and biodiversity conservation

Throughout the 3 intervention areas of SPEA (Berlengas, Açores and Lagoa Pequena), the collaboration of the volunteers has translated into:

- 92 ha of improved habitat from N2000 areas;
- 7500 autochthonous trees and shrubs planted or produced;
- 90 ha of area controlled from invasive species (mainly *Carpobrotus edulis*);

4. Level of satisfaction of volunteers and of the organizations

We received volunteers in 3 different sites, and the satisfaction varies from each one. So, we decided to detailed the answer by site:

Azores

On the volunteer's side, opinions regarding the volunteering were different, while three of them valued the experience as positive, other three volunteers were not so satisfied with the volunteering experience. This lower satisfaction may be related to the fact of the volunteering being long (6 months) and some of the necessary work to be conducted was repetitive.

While the volunteers were able to participate in several actions of the project, the main task was related to plant production in the nurseries that implies repetitive work and some volunteers by the end of the volunteering period resented this repetition. Another difficulty was related to the weather conditions that made it difficult to prepare and adjust to a weekly plan, since works in the area need to be adapted to weather conditions. Finally, some volunteers were not satisfied with the accommodation available, this situation was caused by the reduced income that volunteers receive, that made it difficult for us to find an accommodation that was both affordable with their volunteer support and with their desired characteristics. This problem was increased in 2019, forwarding to 2020, due to the significant increase of tourism activity in Azores and specially in São Miguel island which increased house rental prices significantly.

On the organization's side, satisfaction with the volunteering was also different case by case. On our perception and despite the volunteers being advised on the type of work that they would be conducting, some of them were not strongly motivated to do so. However, some volunteers were very motivated and even had some initiative on developing personal projects to help the organization. In general, while some situations were satisfactory, considering that SPEA Açores is involved in several Erasmus exchange projects that involve internships with universities but specially with professional training

schools, we have noticed that the level of motivation, involvement and work of the latter is much bigger than those involved in the volunteering program.

Berlengas

According to the results of the final evaluation of the project, in general the volunteers who participated in the tasks of the Berlengas were very satisfied with the activity developed (average 4.3, in a scale of 1 to 5). They were also very satisfied (average of 4.4, in a scale of 1 to 5) regarding the monitoring and follow-up of the technical team throughout the project. It should also be noted the high satisfaction with the group dynamics.

Mention should also be made of the joint volunteer who had the greatest difficulty in joining the SPEA team and who was not very satisfied with her participation. Perhaps this difficulty was added by being a volunteer with no previous experience in the area of nature conservation.

As for the marine program, we were very satisfied with the 12 volunteers received. We received Portuguese, Spanish and English volunteers and communication was adequate with everyone and a good relationship was established between the technical team and the volunteers.

Unfortunately, the joint volunteer was the only element who had difficulty integrating into the team, accepting assigned tasks and respecting hierarchies.

Lagoa Pequena

Both volunteers of Lagoa Pequena evaluated their experience as very positive, not only because the way they were received but also because of the work developed and competences acquired. For the site, it was an excellent opportunity to develop more activities and improvements, which otherwise probably would not be implemented, namely in terms of infrastructure maintenance and the creation of teaching resources. The volunteers also made a valuable contribution to enriching the experience of visiting the space, developing guided tours.

5. Definition of the priorities and conservation measures for the applicable N2000 sites, habitats and species

- SPA “Ilhas Berlengas” (PTZPE0009), priority measures were control of invasive alien species such as *Carpobrotus edulis*, monitoring of seabird populations, construction and maintenance of artificial nests for seabirds, monitoring of flora and maintenance of trails.

- SPA “Pico da Vara / Ribeira do Guilherme – Ilha de São Miguel – Azores (PTZPE0033) and SCI “Serra da Tronqueira / Planalto dos Graminhais” (PTMIG0024), priority measures were control of invasive alien species such as *Leycesteria formosa* and manual control techniques to control *Gunnera tinctoria* in bogs, native plants production and maintenance and elaboration of “Atlas Priolo”.

- SPA “Lagoa Pequena” (PTZPE0049) and SCI “Fernão Ferro / Lagoa de Albufeira” (PTCON0054) priority measures were related with maintenance of the “Espaço Interpretativo da Lagoa Pequena” space, monitoring of birdlife, mapping of nesting

species in the reed beds, monitoring of nest boxes, maintenance of trails and repairs of fences around the lagoon.

6. Lessons learnt

General

- It was difficult for the volunteers to pay for an accommodation and food with the allowance defined in the project of 20€ per volunteering day.
- The recruitment process through European Solidarity Corps website revealed not to work for this kind of volunteers and the communication with the candidates is easier through email. The majority of them came from others contacting tools, such as emails sent to universities, advertisement on Facebook and SPEA website
- For SPEA one of the most important aspect of this project was the opportunity to work within a network of other organisations that do similar or completer work and to stablish a lack of procedures related with the management of volunteers (establish a protocol, define the task and monitor them, evaluate the level of satisfaction, etc.)

Specific for the sites

Azores

- Azores bullfinch conservation, which implies large ecological restoration action, volunteer work could be interesting as an educational and awareness raising tool, but it could never replace trained professional workers;
- Additionally, socio-economic impact of the volunteering in the area (Azores) is much smaller than hiring professional workers;
- It is essential to acknowledge and manage volunteer expectations on the programme and make sure that the organization and the proposed work can fulfil those expectations;
- Volunteers require constant supervision on their work and significant training on the beginning of the programme

Berlengas

- Throughout the project it was possible to realize that the closer and more regular the contact with the volunteers, the easier it is to communicate about the tasks and clarify doubts. It was noted that the volunteers like to know in advance what tasks are planned for them to perform. However, the repetition of some tasks throughout the year has led to some tiredness and discouragement, in particular of the third group of volunteers who were the ones who stayed the longest (11 months).
- It was also possible to realize that the selection of volunteers is a difficult and complicated process and, in the case of Berlengas tasks, in which there is a lot of repetition over the weeks, it is important to select a volunteer who is from the science area and who understands the importance of some monitoring, even if the result is zero. This situation

was referred to by the joint volunteer who complained a lot about the tasks performed and who did not understand the reason for doing them.

- The pandemic also brought another way of seeing office work and how we can adapt to working at distance. Despite the initial difficulties, the 3 volunteers were well monitored and were able to carry out their tasks properly because regular online contact was maintained.

Lagoa Pequena

- The project allowed EILP to work with a larger team, which was a situation that had not yet been experienced. It allowed to improve strategies related with the management of staff/volunteers and their tasks

- The year 2020 was especially challenging, due to the covid-19 pandemic. The main lessons were at the level of coordinating a volunteer at a distance and managing the uncertainties

- The recruitment of volunteers was also a main issue, as we had to select the best ways of dissemination (taking into account the specifics of the place) and what motivates potential volunteers to integrate similar challenges.

7. Detailed/updated plan for the activities of the following year

SPEA will no continue its action on 2021.

ACTION A.11

Beneficiary responsible for implementation – APA-ARH Algarve

1. Number and timing of the volunteers mobilised to date

Number of expected volunteers in application	4 + 2
Expected duration of each volunteering in application	1134 volunteering days (counting joint volunteers)
Number of hosted volunteers	7
Actual duration of each volunteering	12 months – 1 volunteer 7 months – 2 volunteer 5 months – 3 volunteer 4 months – 1 volunteer Total of 955 volunteering days
Number of volunteers who quit	1
Number of offers sent on the PASS platform	7
% of hosted volunteers according to time	84%

*comparison of the hosted volunteers with the expected volunteers

2. Activities undertaken by each associated beneficiary as hosting organization

The recruitment of volunteers continued to be made through different platforms:

- Institutional website of the project “Environmental Volunteering for Water”;
- LIFE Volunteer Escapes Facebook page and “Environmental Volunteering for Water” Facebook and Instagram page;
- Emails sent to different universities, schools, institutions and volunteering associations;

The volunteers welcomed in APA ARH-Algarve, receive 20€ per volunteering day for accommodation and food expenses. APA provides some support in finding accommodation for the volunteers. However due to the tourist region and the high prices

on house/apartment rent, there were some difficulties in finding accommodation at affordable price for the volunteers, therefore most of our volunteers, 5 out of 7 were already living in the city of Faro or in cities nearby.

3. Results obtained in terms of contribution of the volunteers to nature and biodiversity conservation

In 2020, starting from March, due to COVID pandemic, many actions involving external local volunteers that were scheduled had to be postponed or eventually cancelled, but in order to continue the work the team (tutor, coordinator and 4 volunteers) continued the actions allowing the growing of the area of IAS controlled and monitoring of ecosystems. Environmental sessions usually held in schools were adapted and implemented online.

Area of IAS controlled – 4,21 ha

Monitoring of Ecosystem Biological Quality – During 2020 we continued the monitoring of the Ecosystem Biological Quality in 16 different control points covering 14 streams in 9 counties: Aljezur (Aljezur); Torre, Budens and Vale Santo (Vila do Bispo); Monchique e Seixe (Monchique); Falacho (Silves); Menalva, Cadoiço and Carcavai (Loulé); Odeleite (S.Brás e Castro Marim); Alportel (S.Brás and Tavira); Paderne (Albufeira); Asseca (Tavira).

Local Volunteers participating in joint activities with ESC volunteers – by the end of 2020, 2338 volunteers have participated in 81 actions promoted under the LIFE Volunteer ESCAPES project. To this number we can add 4535 participants in 54 events (workshops, seminars, sessions in schools) organized under the LIFE Volunteers ESCAPES project.

4. Level of satisfaction of volunteers and of the organizations

Until now the volunteers that have completed their volunteering period have shown to be satisfied with their work in APA.

5. Definition of the priorities and conservation measures for the applicable N2000 sites, habitats and species

The works inside the N2000 sites, “Costa Sudoeste” (SCI, PTCO0012 and SPA, PTZPE0015), “Monchique” (SCI and SPA PTCO0037), “Ria Formosa/Castro Marim” (SCI, PTCO0013), “Ria Formosa” (SPA, PTZPE0017), “Sapais de Castro Marim” (SPA, PTZPE0018) and “Guadiana” (SCI, PTCO0036) continue to have the following priority measures:

- Control of invasive alien species;
- Plantation of native species

- Monitoring of the Ecological Quality of the Ecosystems
- Monitoring Coastal Areas Pollution

6. Lessons learnt

One of the two main difficulties since the beginning of the project have been the lack of affordable accommodation in the region and the difficulty to find volunteers willing to commit to a 12 months long project. Both difficulties have been overcome, the first one by focusing the recruitment of volunteers in youngsters that are already living in the region and the second by the re-adaptation of the original 2 volunteers for a 12-month period plan, for a 4 volunteers' team with the volunteering period of each volunteer laying between 4 and 7 months.

In future projects these changes will be taken in consideration and the focus of the volunteer's recruitment will continue to be in regional residents, unless the financial support to volunteers would be increased and the volunteering programs will be planned for 6 months periods with the possibility of additional months if the volunteer show interest in continuing.

7. Detailed/updated plan for the activities of the following year

In view of the worsening of the pandemic situation in Portugal, APA-ARH Algarve, contrary to what was predicted when the decision to extend the project, will focus its actions on online environmental awareness, as well as reinforcing its presence on social networks. These actions will always focus on voluntary environmental monitoring and the contribution of volunteering to nature conservation.

If the situation allows it, we will resume conservation actions on the ground. The volunteers during this period will do teleworking, processing of content data for the referred actions.