

ECOTOURISM IN THE EBRO DELTA: 2019-2021 ACTION PLAN

1. OBJECTIVES

The **2019-2021 Action Plan for the Ebro Delta** within the framework of the **Land-Sea Interreg Europe** project is associated with the European Charter for Sustainable Tourism in Protected Areas (ECST) of the Ebro Delta and contemplates the following strategic objectives:

Objective 1. Improve the coordination and participation of the agents involved in the planning and management of ecotourism in the Ebro Delta, especially in the scope of the Natural Park.

Objective 2. Preserve and recover the heritage of the delta, paying special attention to resources with ecotourism value.

Objective 3. Improve the quality and sustainability of the Ebro Delta's facilities, particularly ecotourism facilities.

Objective 4. Adopt an innovative approach to the creation of ecotourism experiences and their promotion.

Objective 5. Improve the training and awareness of professionals related to the ecotourism sector in order to favour the sustainability and competitiveness of the tourism sector.

2. STRATEGIC TOPICS & ACTIONS

The STRATEGIC TOPICS that correspond to the objectives established above are described below with the ACTIONS planned for each one of them:

TOPIC 1. Improvement of the coordination and participation of agents

- 1.1 Improvement of participation in the Ebro Delta Sustainable Tourism Forum
- 1.2 Development of tourism business associations and renewal of companies adhered to the ECST
- 1.3 Organisation of the ENS | Ecotourism, Nature and Sustainability Forum for ecotourism sector professionals in the Ebro Delta
- 1.4 Promotion of synergies between the ECST and Biosphere Reserve certificates

TOPIC 2. Preservation and recovery of deltaic heritage

- 2.1 Monitoring of visitors and increased supervision of public activity in El Delta de l'Ebre Natural Park (PNDE)
- 2.2 Planning, protection and recovery of natural enclaves open to the public
- 2.3 Planning of tourist activities along the River Ebro and on the beaches

TOPIC 3. Improvement of the quality and sustainability of the ecotourism facilities of the Ebro Delta

- 3.1 Improvement of accessibility and interpretation for people with special needs
- 3.2 Promotion of the bicycle as a sustainable means of transport
- 3.3 Pilot project to foster the contribution of tourism to conservation
- 3.4 Optimisation of public facilities in the Natural Park and the Ebro Delta

TOPIC 4. Creation of ecotourism experiences and promotion

- 4.1 Knowledge of the Ebro Delta's tourism supply and demand
- 4.2 Development of ecotourism experiences in the Ebro Delta
- 4.3 Preparation of guidelines for the responsible promotion of El Delta de l'Ebre Natural Park

TOPIC 5. Training and awareness for sustainable tourism

- 5.1 Coordination and execution of a training programme for the tourism sector
- 5.2 Park expert course and accreditation of PNDE guides

3. DESCRIPTION OF THE ACTIONS

TOPIC 1. Improvement of the coordination and participation of agents

1.1. *Improvement of participation in the Ebro Delta Sustainable Tourism Forum*

Justification

To ensure the suitable execution of the Action Plan, it is necessary to coordinate and energise the agents involved in each one of the actions and to implement a systematic and effective monitoring plan to keep the Ebro Delta Sustainable Tourism Forum (FTSDE) up to date with progress and facilitate assessment work in 2021.

Description

- Continuity of the Technical Monitoring Committee, made up of technical staff from the Public Use Area (head, technician and ECST technician) and the director of the PNDE.
- Validate and execute the 2019-2021 Monitoring Plan, taking into account the following points:
 - Confirm the composition and operation of the work commissions in place from 2017 to 2021.
 - Each work commission will appoint a coordinator to be responsible for its proper operation for a period of five years.
 - The parties responsible for each action will fill out an action monitoring form on an annual basis, completing the indicators and providing the required documentation.
 - Full-time hiring by the PNDE of a technician (ECST technician) exclusively for the Action Plan to carry out the following functions with the support of the Public Use Area of the park.

COORDINATION

- Quarterly contact with the parties responsible for the actions.
- Identification of new opportunities or connection points between the various actions that may arise during their development. Communication to the parties responsible for these actions.
- Organisation of six-monthly meetings between the parties responsible for the actions in order to jointly assess the degree of execution achieved, prior to the six-monthly meeting of the FTSDE.
- Incorporation into the monitoring matrix of the results of each meeting for communication to the FTSDE.

- Permanent technical support for the work commissions and agents responsible for the actions.

MONITORING

- Prepare and approve the 2019-2021 Monitoring Plan, which includes the implementation matrix and action monitoring form.
- Annual updating of the implementation matrix prior to the six-monthly meeting of the FTSDE.
- Preparation of annual monitoring reports and communication to the FTSDE.

IMPROVE COMMUNICATION

- Hold two annual meetings of the FTSDE, avoiding long presentations through the prior dissemination of the contents, fostering participation and constructive debate, and periodically restating the purpose of the forum, especially for new members. To achieve greater involvement, make it easy for members of the forum to add points to the agenda.
- On at least a six-monthly basis, prior to the FTSDE meeting, update the progress made by the work commissions (under the responsibility of each coordinator) and of the Action Plan (under the responsibility of the monitoring technician).
- Improve the operability of the PNDE website to ensure that the main documentation about the ECST is accessible, positively discriminating which companies are adhered to Phase II of the ECST and which will adhere in the future to Phase III.
- Investigate new forms of communication and agree the method for the FTSDE (regular space in the Soldó newsletter, Google Drive, news on social media, etc.), establishing the person responsible, periodicity and the type of content in each medium.

INCREASE PARTICIPATION

- Ensure that the list of members of the FTSDE is public, widely accessible and promoted in order to foster a sense of belonging to the forum.
- Consolidate a sense of belonging to the FTSDE through the signature of a commitment document (attendance, participation, cooperation, etc.).
- Reinforce active participation in the work commissions.
- Investigate and agree new forms of virtual participation.
- Establish a minimum level of attendance at forum meetings for companies adhered to the ECST (established in the Phase II collaboration agreement) and the seven deltaic town councils (included in the document signed by the town councils to manifest their commitment to the ECST).

EXPAND THE FTSDE AND INCREASE ITS DIVERSITY

- Preparation of a list of public bodies and private groups whose involvement should be sought.
- Implementation of measures for the integration of public administrations with responsibilities in the delta, production sectors, and citizen and professional groups active in tourism, the environment, culture, education, animal welfare, etc.
- Ask members of the FTSDE to identify and encourage integration between bodies in their respective scopes of action in order to improve and expand cooperation for sustainability.

1.2. Development of tourism business associations and renewal of companies adhered to the ECST

Justification

Associations of tourism businesses that include sustainability as one of their objectives constitute a key element for the achievement of the principles of the ECST, the execution of action plans and effective progress towards sustainable tourism.

The Association of Companies and Touristic Activities of the Ebro Delta (AEATDE), created in 2005, is the only association with the same territorial scope as the Ebro Delta. The AEATDE has been carrying out important work in accordance with its collaboration agreement with the PNDE. Its 30 current partners include 30 of the 105 companies accredited as Information Points of the park and 17 of the 29 companies adhered to the ECST, highlighting its collaboration with the PNDE and its commitment to sustainability, in addition to a high degree of participation in the FTSDE, the work commissions and the development of activities organised with the PNDE.

Additionally, the Ebro Regions Rural Tourism Association (ATUREBRE), whose objective is to group the rural accommodation of the four regions of Les Terres de l'Ebre (El Baix Ebre, El Montsià, La Ribera d'Ebre, and La Terra Alta). It currently has 33 members from the regions of El Montsià and El Baix Ebre, of which 19 are Information Points of the PNDE and nine are adhered to the ECST. This association is perhaps less active than the one above in terms of sustainable tourism, but it has participated in the Forum meetings and collaborated with the campaign 'Per un Delta Net' (For a Clean Delta). Within the framework of this new action plan it is committed to increasing its involvement and participation in the work groups and some of the actions of the plan.

The majority of tourist associations do not have sufficient resources to hire staff, so project management, promotion and participation work falls under the responsibility of the entrepreneurs themselves, to the detriment of their businesses. This is the main reason why associations do not participate as much as they would like and sometimes end up becoming inactive or disappearing.

Description

- Undertaking of procedures with the support of the PNDE to hire administrative/technical staff through the Catalan Employment Service (SOC), engage interns or seek possible subsidies for hiring staff with a view to supporting the associations, executing their agreements and updating the website.
- Updating and improvement of the websites of AEATDE (www.deltadelebreturisme.com) and ATUREBRE (www.ebrerural.com).
- Active participation in the meetings of the FTSDE and of the work commissions to which they belong.
- Involvement in initiatives that foster sustainable tourism in the delta: ECST Day during Green Week, activities in the International Year of Sustainable Tourism, Terres de l'Ebre Biosphere Reserve tourism work group, rice festivals, the Delta Birding Festival, the Mescla gastronomy festival, the Clean Delta programme, promotional actions on the local, regional and national levels, etc.
- Preparation of public-private cooperation events for the dissemination of the actions of the ECST to citizens and visitors to seek their involvement.
- Participation in fairs and events related to the promotion of the ECST and of the association.

ECST COMPANY SUPPORT AND MONITORING

The PNDE, as the entity responsible for the membership system in the Ebro Delta and a signatory to the Collaboration Agreements, is responsible for supporting and monitoring

compliance with the actions and the promotion of these companies as representatives of sustainable tourism in the Ebro Delta.

The methodology established for monitoring in the three years of execution of the Actions Programme by the adhered companies includes:

- A joint annual session to clarify doubts and exchange information and experiences.
- Individuals visits to each company.
- Support provided via telephone and email.
- Registration of the annual development of the execution of each one of the actions implemented by the companies.

The PNDE must in turn monitor compliance with its own commitments to the companies and inform them of the results, especially in terms of specific positive discrimination actions for adhered companies as sustainable tourism leaders.

ASSESSMENT AND RENEWAL

Companies interested in continuing their membership will have to:

- Submit to an assessment that will verify:
 - Ongoing compliance with the basic actions established by the Membership System.
 - Compliance with the Actions Programme.
- Prepare a new Actions Programme for the next three years, which must be approved by the PNDE.

The PNDE will provide the companies with support and advice to help them with the renewal process and will sign new collaboration agreements with the companies.

1.3. Organisation of the ENS | Ecotourism, Nature and Sustainability Forum for ecotourism sector professionals in the Ebro Delta

Justification

The Ecotourism Board of Catalonia, the top regional body in Catalonia for the application and monitoring of the NaturCAT 2020 Plan, establishes the organisation of a forum every two years in a Catalan territory to bring together ecotourism professionals with the aim of debating and considering joint work lines and proposals. In Autumn 2019, the Ebro Delta is scheduled to play host to the 2nd ENS | Ecotourism, Nature and Sustainability Forum for the ecotourism sector's most prestigious professionals.

Description

In Autumn 2019, the 2nd ENS | Ecotourism, Nature and Sustainability Forum will be held in the Ebro Delta. For several days, almost 200 ecotourism professionals will come together to learn about new initiatives, debate matters of importance to the sector and hold thematic work sessions. In this edition the cross-disciplinary subjects will cover how ecotourism can contribute to the deseasonalisation of the tourism sector and how ecotourism can be practiced throughout the year in Catalonia.

The following actions are planned for this forum:

- Fam trip and workshop with receptive tour operators and travel agents to publicise companies and activities developed in the Ebro Delta and other ecotourism destinations in Catalonia.
- Framework conferences to inspire and reflect on the status of the sector and present and future challenges in order to continue making progress.
- Informative talks about new advances in the sector: relevant data about user profiles, preferences, trends, training, regulations, new communication tools, etc.
- Brief presentations on new projects and innovative initiatives in ecotourism throughout Catalonia in relation to the subject of deseasonalisation.
- Participative work sessions for the preparation of joint results (for example, collaboration in public-private partnerships) or new proposals for the future.
- Field trips to visit ecotourism facilities and examples of innovative activities in this sector.

1.4. *Promotion of synergies between the ECST and Biosphere Reserve certificates*

Justification

The ECST in the Ebro Delta has served as a very useful tool that has improved coordination and involvement, making progress towards sustainable tourism. This internationally recognised accreditation includes a rigorous verification system. In a wider context, Les Terres de l'Ebre was declared a Biosphere Reserve by UNESCO on 28 May 2013.

In recent years it has become evident that the two certificates, issued by two different bodies, are making progress in parallel and do not always enjoy suitable integration, harmony or mutual recognition. In fact, the tourism businesses in the delta have manifested growing unease because Les Terres de l'Ebre Biosphere Reserve (RBTE) does not sufficiently recognise the hard work and achievements of the businesses that belong to the ECST. This situation forces interested parties to make a choice between the two certificates.

Given the absolute importance of the role of tourism businesses in the ECST, it is necessary to achieve suitable coordination and a commitment to collaboration and mutual support in order for the two certificates to strengthen and complement each other, taking advantage of each one's singularity and avoiding any traces of competition.

Description

Establish a collaboration agreement, with the most suitable legal form, between the PNDE, as the body responsible for the ECST, and Les Terres de l'Ebre Consortium of Environmental Policies (COPATE), as the body responsible for the RBTE, to improve coordination and optimise synergies between the two certificates with the aim of achieving the greatest benefits possible for the actors involved and substantial progress in sustainable tourism.

Points to take into account:

- The thematic scope of accreditation, singularity, verification systems and the importance of each one of the certificates.
- The territorial scope of application, parties responsible, management methods, background and the course of each one in the territory, in addition to progress and achievements.
- The contribution of the Actions Plans of the ECST since 2007 to improve the tourism sustainability of the Ebro Delta, which is the model for the whole of the RBTE, whilst also representing compliance with the commitments of the Action Plan of the RBTE in its sustainable tourism line in the deltaic territory.
- Reciprocal support and complementarity between the two certificates, such as the inspirational role of ECST actions in the Action Plan of the Biosphere Reserve, or the role of the Biosphere Reserve in the execution of certain actions in the ECST Action Plan.
- A permanent system for coordination between the bodies that manage the two certificates and their associated actions plans, and six-monthly meetings between the PNDE and the COPATE to review joint or related actions. This will ensure that the ECST is taken into account in the Action Plan of the RBTE and vice versa.
- A formula to facilitate the securing of the RBTE certificate for companies adhered to the ECST and vice versa (process, fees, requirements, documents, etc.). It is a matter of analysing what each one requires of the other in terms of verification, training, sustainability requirements, documentation to be submitted, and fees. The objective is to promote both accreditations, making it easier for companies that have one to obtain the other and properly recognise the efforts made by ECST companies.
- A mutual commitment to disseminate the two certificates and their achievements in the Ebro Delta.

TOPIC 2. Preservation and recovery of deltaic heritage

2.1. Monitoring of visitors and increased supervision of public activity in El Delta de l'Ebre Natural Park (PNDE)

Justification

- In El Delta de l'Ebre Natural Park (PNDE) there is significant pressure in terms of public use: more than 62,000 people (2015 data) live in the delta and the park is one of the most visited in Catalonia, with an estimated 600,000 visitors per year.
- Much of the surface area of the park extends over a long and narrow coastal strip, so its monitoring, in spite of the horizontal nature of the terrain, requires more forces than a rounded surface.
- In 2016, the park had four wardens: two hired by the Ministry of Territory and Sustainability (DTS) and two by the public company Forestal Catalana S.A. In late 2016, one of the DTS positions was lost (an employee requested leave and was not replaced). Given that the only employee that the DTS maintains spends half their time carrying out fortnightly censuses of birds, it can be said that the staff has been halved with respect to the team of five people in place in 2007 prior to the financial crisis.
- In other protected spaces that have suffered a reduction in wardens there is sensation of permissiveness for some and impunity for others, which is turning out to be highly pernicious and costly to reverse.

Description

It is a question of monitoring the visitors and contributing to managing the flows of visitors and their activities and behaviour in sensitive areas of the territory.

VISITOR MONITORING

So far, the PNDE has been quantifying the number of people attended at its two information centres, Ecomuseum and La Casa de Fusta, with data about their source, type of group (schoolchildren, retirees, etc.), visit duration (one-day excursion or number of nights spent in the delta), but it is necessary to have more precise information to adequately manage the flows of visitors. Accordingly, the following actions are proposed:

- Install counters or gauges in the areas of most tourism demand, such as:
 - Bicycle lanes in La Tancada and L'Encanyissada
 - Els Ullals de Baltasar
 - El Garxal

The counters must be mobile so they can be moved to other areas in accordance with information needs.

- Take advantage of the collaboration of ECST tourism companies in the monitoring of visitors, and of PNDE Information Point companies in order to have qualitative information (social profile, activities, degree of satisfaction, etc.).
- Systematise the information obtained by the PNDE from the unified survey and the visitor statistics of all the information centres of Catalan parks, planned by the Ecotourism Board. Establish a simple system for the processing of the data and the dissemination of the results, at least to collaborating businesses.

REINFORCEMENT OF WARDEN ACTIVITY IN PUBLIC AND SENSITIVE AREAS

Until growing awareness among the local and visitor populations enables the gradual reduction of warden activity it will be necessary to increase this work and make it more visible. All too often visitors, audiovisual production companies and other users are found in restricted areas or carrying out activities that are not permitted or not authorised.

- Encourage the competent bodies to have a suitable number of park wardens, especially in the most sensitive areas.

- Provide suitable training for the park wardens who are selected and hired.
- Hold PNDE management coordination meetings annually or six-monthly with the various managers of rural agents, municipal agents, Mossos d'Esquadra (Catalan police) and SEPRONA (National Protection Service) agents.
- Recognise the help of tourism entities and businesses that collaborate by alerting the agents and the SEPRONA and encourage others to generally adopt this attitude. Prepare a simple protocol on how to act in the event of suspicious activity, wounded animals, and infractions.

2.2. Planning, protection and recovery of natural enclaves open to the public

Justification

The origin of the European Charter for Sustainable Tourism in Protected Areas is the need to provide the managers of protected natural areas with an effective instrument to make biodiversity and natural resource conservation objectives compatible with public use and enjoyment. In the Delta de l'Ebre Natural Park (PNDE) there is significant pressure in terms of public use: more than 62,000 people (2015 data) live in the delta and the park is one of the most visited in Catalonia, with an estimated 600,000 visitors per year.

For these reasons, in 2007 the PNDE carried out a visitor capacity study to determine the sustainability thresholds of the most visited enclaves and define instruments for the management of the influx of visitors in order to guarantee the conservation and preservation of these enclaves.

The study's recommendations form the guide that determines the actions of the PNDE, but they are also a growing reference for the actions and projects of other public and private entities in the scope of the planning and recovery of natural enclaves.

Description

CONTINUED APPLICATION OF THE CAPACITY STUDY

Following the actions undertaken at El Fangar, Eucaliptus Beach, El Migjorn, El Garxal, El Trabucador, La Punta de la Banya and Els Ullals de Baltasar, the aim is to continue with the execution of the recommendations, such as:

- Plan for the protection and conversation of the ecosystems of El Serrallo Beach. The plan was drafted in 2015 and its first phase was executed in 2016 with the installation of a protective plant life perimeter.

CONTINUATION OF THE RECOVERY OF THE WOODS, RIVERSIDE UNDERGROWTH AND SHADE TREES

The aim is for the PNDE to continue coordinating reforestation work in:

- Recovery of the woods and riverside undergrowth on the banks of the River Ebro, taking advantage, for example, of the volunteer work coordinated by SEO/BirdLife
- Recovery of stands of shade trees, which are representative elements of the landscape of the Ebro Delta that are being destroyed by agricultural practices, in which the park's volunteers' association, schools and families collaborate. Within this recovery effort, the separation between shade trees must be agreed with the Irrigation Community in order to allow agricultural machinery to manoeuvre.

COORDINATION BETWEEN COMPETENT BODIES AND/OR WITH PLANNED PROJECTS

The aim is for the PNDE to coordinate with the various public and private organisations that are developing projects for the environmental improvement of natural areas of the Ebro Delta in order to ensure, among other things, that actions in the scope of public use are in line with the recommendations of the Capacity Study.

The organisations and projects identified so far are:

- **Campanya pels Sediments (Sediment Campaign)**, presented in February 2015 by the Platform for the Defence of the Ebro, made up by Ecologistas en Acció, SEO/BirdLife, Delta Polet, River Movies, scientists and residents of the delta. In that year the campaign focused on informing the population of threats to the delta and its critical situation, in addition to solutions to restore the ecological flows of the river and free sediment trapped in reservoirs, which fills them and reduces their capacity. In late 2016, the platform submitted a motion to request the removal of silt from the Ribaroja and Mequinenza reservoirs, which will be submitted to the Catalan parliament within the framework of the drafting of a Comprehensive Management Plan for the Sediment of the Ebro Basin in 2017. Currently, signatures are being collected to show the support of public and private organisations in the territory; the Governing Board of the PNDE will decide whether to add its signature to this initiative, which has attracted the attention of some high-impact television programmes.
- **The LIFE project ‘Natural solutions for integrated management and spatial planning in a regressive delta’**, submitted by the Agri-food Research and Technology Institute (IRTA) in partnership with organisations like the irrigation community, Deltebre Town Council, the Ministry of Territory and Sustainability and the Polytechnic University of Catalonia. Budget: €2,566,990. To be carried out in the northern half of the delta. It is planned to be completed in December 2021.
- **Project for the planning of El Trabucador Beach**, developed by Sant Carles de la Ràpita Town Council. The project includes the installation of a bar and a temporary parking infrastructure to control vehicular access in the high season, which some years ago a university study estimated to be 1,600 vehicles passing through and 800 parked. These figures are expected to have increased. The control of vehicles passing through is linked to the aforementioned planning project, with a budget of approximately €400,000.
- **The Delta Lagoon LIFE project**, with actions in 2016 and 2017 (Catalunya-La Pedrera Foundation) at Las Salinas de Sant Antoni, including the dismantling of electricity line posts and the burial of the line (already undertaken).
- **Alfacs Bay environmental improvement project**, including demolition of moorings, removal of breakwaters, decompaction of paths, planting of indigenous species, construction of a bicycle lane, a pedestrian path and a road for vehicular traffic. Action on 14,800 m, €16,235,709. Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries, Food and Environment (MAPAMA).

2.3. Planning of tourist activities along the River Ebro and on the beaches

Justification

The River Ebro is navigable through to its final stretch. Therefore, the aim is to achieve greater supervision of navigation in the Ebro and to establish or publicise navigability regulations with the aim of reducing the erosion of the banks and noise pollution, among other aspects.

With regard to the beaches, the Ebro Delta is known for its wide and extensive beaches, which have generated problems concerning motorised access, overnight stays and illegal campsites, and in recent years there have also been major concerts and festivals on certain beaches in the delta with varying degrees of institutional support.

These activities, along with new leisure activities, like kite surfing, boogie, and recreational fishing, which has increased thanks to the growing participation of tourists, collide with the attributes of the delta as an ECST destination: nature, tranquillity, landscapes, gastronomy, no overcrowding, etc., that is, the image that is mainly promoted of the Ebro Delta.

Description

With respect to the planning of tourist activities in the fluvial scope of the final stretch of the Ebro, actions should be taken in the organisational, regulatory and awareness scopes with at least the following content:

CONTINUITY OF THE PERMANENT WORK COMMISSION RIU EBRE, RIU SOSTENIBLE (EBRO RIVER, SUSTAINABLE RIVER)

- Review of its composition to determine whether to include new organisations or groups, such as tourism businesses and conservationists, at least as guests in sessions covering subjects for which consensus is desirable.
- Agreement of a work schedule and objectives to be achieved in the next five years.
- At least two meetings per year, one of which must be attended in person.

COMPILATION OF THE ZONING REGULATIONS ON ACTIVITIES IN THE LAST STRETCH OF THE RIVER EBRO AND ITS BANKS

- Update consensus on the zoning and regulation of activities in each area by Ebro River, Sustainable River Commission.
- Review the Harbour Master's Office Guidelines (Ministry of Development) on navigation regulations, as there are no specific regulations for Catalonia.
- Obtain mandatory reports from the bodies involved: town councils, Catalan Water Agency (ACA), Ebro Hydrographical Confederation (CHE), Coastal Services of the Government of Catalonia and of the Spanish Government, and the Harbour Master's Office.
- Approval from the town councils of the corresponding municipal bylaws on the zoning and regulation of activities in each area.
- Prepare a version of the regulations compiled in plain language, accompanied by the resulting zoning so it can be understood and disseminated.

APPLICATION, MONITORING, CONTROL AND SANCTIONING OF THE REGULATIONS

- All official bodies with competence over this section of the River Ebro must collaborate, within the framework of their respective areas of responsibility, on the application of the approved regulations and zoning to be compiled.
- Dissemination of the regulations to the bodies and groups involved due to their activity on the river, preparing a version in plain language.
- Execution of the timeline, to be completed in the next five years.

INCORPORATION OF THE BANKS OF THE BEACHES INTO MONITORING, CONTROL AND SANCTIONING ACTIVITIES

In the scope of monitoring and control in order to seek greater efficiency and operability and to facilitate work for the parties responsible (municipal agents, rural agents, Mossos

d'Esquadra (Catalan police) and SEPRONA (National Protection Service) agents), it is necessary to incorporate the regulations pertaining to beach activities that are finally approved.

This will allow agents to take note of alleged infractions and report them, in accordance with a single general text covering all the various regulations, without any red tape, to the Harbour Master's Office, to the corresponding town council or to any other body that is competent to process and impose the relevant fines.

INFORMATION AND AWARENESS UNDER THE SLOGAN "RIU EBRE, RIU SOSTENIBLE" (EBRO RIVER, SUSTAINABLE RIVER)

- Design and development of information and awareness actions, under the slogan "Riu Ebre, riu sostenible" (Ebro River, Sustainable River).
- Drafting of a code of good practices for the Ebro and its banks, with health, social, safety, environmental, respect and other recommendations.
- Printing and dissemination of a pamphlet summarising the good practices in the periods of maximum influx for example.
- Dissemination of the code in the media and directly to the main users, sports groups and tourism businesses so they can transmit it to their associates and customers.

In relation to the suitable conservation of the beaches, flora and fauna and coexistence with motor vehicles and to avoid conflicts between kites, bathers, fishermen, sun shades, dogs, nudists and other uses and users, the following activities are proposed:

- Install temporary notices at the entrances to beaches to provide information about the regulations and dissuade caravanners and motor vehicles.
- In the summer season install small areas to collect waste and recycle glass in well-maintained bins on the beaches.
- Associate these areas with other temporary, soft infrastructure, such as mobile information points and car parks in delimited areas, equipping them with surveillance (which many people will appreciate) for a modest price, ensuring to the extent possible a return on investment through the creation of jobs. Use the car parks to control the mass influx at Easter and in summer, reporting information about their capacity.
- Tackle the problem of overnight caravan stays, creating areas for them in the urban periphery so they do not use the seafront promenades.
- Install notices in locations where there are recreational fishermen on the permitted timetables and urging them to take their beer cans and the synthetic boxes of Korean worms they use as bait home with them.
- Create delimited areas for dogs, holding their owners responsible for their safety and for collecting their excrement; hold kite surf companies and practitioners responsible for their actions, etc.

There are four actions to be carried out and continued:

- Preparation of the zoning plan or plans for the uses and activities on the beaches, by town, even by beach, such as the case of El Trabucador, given that it is unlikely that a single plan will serve for all beaches, although they may have many problems in common and, therefore, their solutions for the panning of activities may also be shared.

- Approval of municipal bylaws to provide legal validity to the formulas used to order activities (space for dogs, rolling walkways, temporary car parks, etc.).

Moreover, these bylaws must comply with coastal legislation if the activities they regulate are developed in the maritime-terrestrial space and they must be negotiated in order to seek a favourable interpretation of the legislation, and approved by the Coast Management Service and the Ministry of Agriculture (MAPAMA). In scopes in which there is no applicable

legislation, it will be a question of reaching agreements with the greatest possible consensus, based on the preservation of the resource and also user satisfaction.

The zoning of the activities will be reflected in the seasonal services and uses plan of the beaches that each town council must present on an annual basis to the Coast Service of the Ministry of Territorial Policy and Public Works, prior before March 1.

- Beach user information and awareness.
- Monitoring of nautical activities in the bays.

TOPIC 3. Improvement of the quality and sustainability of the ecotourism facilities of the Ebro Delta

3.1. Improvement of accessibility and interpretation for people with special needs

Justification

In 2010, the ‘Improvement of accessibility in public facilities of Delta de l’Ebre Natural Park’ project was prepared and later that same year it won the ‘Accessibility in Protected Natural Areas’ award. This was completed with dissemination work, which has generated significant institutional recognition:

- By the Catalan Tourist Board, as one of Catalonia’s 23 accessible destinations, www.turismeperatohom.com.
- By the PANTOU (Promoting Accessible Tourism in Europe) project, and www.pantou.org.

Description

The institutional recognition of the work done so far constitutes a very solid base to continue making progress in the improvement of accessibility in the park and also an incentive to generalise it throughout the Ebro Delta.

CONTINUATION OF THE IMPROVE ACCESSIBILITY IN THE PNDE PROJECT

Complete the work pending in the ‘Improvement of accessibility in public facilities of Delta de l’Ebre Natural Park’ project:

- Completion of Els Ullals de Baltasar route. Work has been going on to condition this natural area so it can be visited by the public since 2009. In 2011, the 500 metre Els Ullals route was executed. The action will consist of conditioning a further 330 metres of route so it is circular and adapted for people with reduced mobility. The action is planned for 2019.
- Adapted route in the riverside woodland of Els Ullals de Baltasar: drafting of the executive project for the undertaking of an adapted route through a river bank tree stand on former rice paddies in 2013.
- Adaptation of the Ecomuseum and the aquarium, in Deltebre, with the following actions:
 - Comprehensive improvement of the facilities with the relocation of interpretative panels.
 - New lift for people with reduced mobility, in 2018.
 - The alteration of the horizontal and vertical layout of the aquariums so they are accessible for all and of the central tank of the aquarium, to be undertaken in 2021.

MONITORING, ASSESSMENT AND DISSEMINATION OF ACCESSIBLE FACILITIES

The following will be undertaken at the same time, as and when the progress of the works permits:

- Monitoring of the work done.

- Dissemination of results on the PNDE website and in the local press. The presentation of information about the accessibility of PNDE facilities requires specific, prominent space on the website.
- Communication by email to tourist companies accredited as Information Points of the PNDE and the companies adhered to the ECST so they can inform their customers and use the facilities.
- Inclusion on the accessible tourism website www.turismeperatohom.catalunya.com.
- Communication via email to the local, regional and national associations of the sector of the opening of new facilities that allow people with disabilities to visit the park, in addition to promotion of the ones currently in place.
- Assessment of the affected sectors' satisfaction with the accessibility of the facilities of the PNDE by means of a satisfaction survey offered at the Ecomuseum.

IDENTIFICATION OF NEW ACCESSIBILITY IMPROVEMENT OPTIONS

In three different approaches:

- Identify simple adaptations that can greatly improve the accessibility of accessible facilities. The satisfaction surveys will be very useful for this identification.
- Provide specific training for public or private monitors or guides for groups of disabled people, especially among the staff using the PNDE's facilities, such as the Ecomuseum and La Casa de Fusta.
- The improvements made so far have focused solely on reduced mobility, but the concept of *Tourism for All* suggests actions for other disabilities (deafness, blindness, etc.).
- Nature Tourism Development Plan for Protected Natural Areas of Catalonia:
 - Action 14. Prioritisation of accessibility projects at ecotourism facilities.
 - Action 15. Ecotourism facilities compatible with the initiative 'Accessible tourism. Tourism for all'.

PROMOTION OF IMPROVED ACCESSIBILITY IN THE EBRO DELTA

Generalise the improvement of accessibility at the public facilities of the Ebro Delta, continuing the work line and experience of the PNDE, to place the Ebro Delta in a good position as an accessible tourist destination. Accordingly, the following are suggested:

- At public facilities, in public or private hands, such as tourist information offices. Study and improve the degree of accessibility, updating and completing the lists prepared in 2012 by each town council, at the initiative of Deltebre, although L'Aldea and Sant Jaume d'Enveja are still pending, and preparing a five-year action plan.
- In the range of tourist services. Improve information about accessible services; this information may be provided by the associations, with the collaboration of member accommodation establishments, restaurants and activity companies, and they must be included on the websites of the associations with the option of filtering them. Increase the number of accessible tourism services, given that the information currently available indicates that it seems to be very low.
- Seek funding, with the support of the PNDE experience, to implement adaptations, from bodies like LEADER, the Ministry of Work, Social Affairs and Families, and town councils.

3.2. Promotion of the bicycle as a sustainable means of transport

Justification

The bicycle has always been the traditional means of transport in the delta and it continues to be so for the elderly, as well as a model for the young and, above all, for adults who use cars even for very short trips.

Due to its lack of relief, the delta is an ideal location for cycling, and therefore for the dissemination of its numerous social, environmental, health and commercial benefits.

A BUS+BIKE service has been provided with the HIFE bus company. Deltebre town council has developed a campaign called 'Go to school by bike', which includes a bicycle repair workshop and was included in the Network of Cities for Bikes (created in 2009). Unfortunately, it no longer forms part of this network and perhaps has also lost its chance to lead the promotion of bicycles in the Ebro Delta.

Description

It is a collective effort consisting of a variety of actions:

- Management, monitoring and participation in planning consultations for the Ebro Delta ring road in order to ensure that a bicycle lane is always included where possible, such as at Lo Passador bridge (over the River Ebro, between Deltebre and Sant Jaume d'Enveja, 2010), or to otherwise seek alternatives to connect all the cycle routes of the delta, taking advantage of its exceptional conditions for cycling.
- Drafting of a standard bylaw on bicycle traffic that can be applied to the seven towns in the Ebro Delta.
- Dissemination at education centres, residents' associations and among the media, in addition to the Soldó newsletter, of the benefits (social, environmental, health and commercial) of the use of the bicycle as a means of transport, with arguments like:
 - Whether to get about, practice bicycle tourism or enjoy established routes, it is a healthy, green and educational leisure alternative.
 - Cycling is a form of physical exercise that most people can access. Moderate exercise for 30 minutes a day is beneficial to your health and can extend your life expectancy.
 - The bicycle is the most effective means of transport in urban environments for trips of less than 7 km.
- Continuation of the 'Go to school by bike' campaign. Creation of a bicycle repair workshop at secondary schools, at which pupils will learn to repair old bicycles abandoned in their towns and at recycling centres, following the experience at Deltebre secondary school. The repaired bicycles will be donated by Social Services to families with limited resources.
- Undertaking of an inventory of bicycle parking facilities and needs detected by the town councils. Consider the possibility of incorporating the seven deltaic towns in the Network of Cities for the Bicycle, which would also be of interest for bike tourism.
- Drafting of a code of conduct for road safety.
- Maintain and improve the BUS+BIKE service provided by HIFE buses, holding new work meetings with the company.

3.3. Pilot project to foster the contribution of tourism to conservation

Justification

The Ebro Delta is an example to be followed in terms of the involvement of various bodies, foundations and civil society in projects and initiatives for the conservation of the territory. It includes numerous prominent examples, such as the collaboration of agri-food entrepreneurs who donate a percentage of their profits to the PNDE, the Commitment to Sustainable Tourism of Sant Carles de la Ràpita Nautical Station, which allocates 1% of its budget to recovery, environmental improvement or research projects in the territory, the dedication of part of the profits of each edition of the Delta Birding Festival to a biodiversity research or conservation projects, and the financial contribution of tourism entrepreneurs and associations to cleaning campaigns for a 'CLEAN DELTA'.

This involvement could be used to debate, design and implement a pilot initiative to increase the direct contribution of tourist activity to the conservation of biodiversity and of the landscape of the Ebro Delta, making progress towards a more sustainable tourist destination.

Description

The action will consist of:

- Compiling information about initiatives in other territories and possible tools to use.
- Identifying potential conservation projects or actions that could support the tourism industry.
- Preparing a battery of proposals to promote the contribution of tourist activity (bodies, companies, tourists, visitors) to biodiversity and landscape conservation actions. Taking into account the following possibilities:
 - Dedication of a percentage of tourism taxes to conservation projects.
 - Transfer the experience of agri-food producers to the tourism industry (percentage of annual profits).
 - Crowdfunding promoted by tourism bodies and companies, fostering the involvement of the industry and visitors.
 - Consolidation of a permanent contribution from tourism companies to the CLEAN DELTA campaign.
 - Application of a voluntary contribution when charging for accommodation, restaurant, activity and other services for specific conservation projects.
 - Involve visitors and tourists in the cleaning of the delta by means of an awareness campaign with informative posters, biodegradable bags and places to deposit collected rubbish. Much of the rubbish that affects the landscape of delta is carried in by the sea or the River Ebro, rather than being generated in the delta, and therefore it is everyone's responsibility. (ATUREBRE - AEATDE).
- Hold meetings with potential collaborating bodies to discuss and select the most suitable initiatives to be implemented in the Ebro Delta.
- Design a pilot project to implement the selected initiatives, incorporating the necessary promotional materials and means and their monitoring.
- Monitoring and assessment of the results.

3.4. Optimisation of public facilities in the Natural Park and the Ebro Delta

Justification

In the last ten years numerous actions have been undertaken to improve the network of public facilities and services in the PNDE, although, for budgetary reasons not all the planned projects could be implemented. The importance of continuing this line of work in the next five years has become evident.

Description

Expand the public facilities and services of the **Delta de l'Ebre Natural Park**, in addition to improving the quality and interpretative content of existing ones. The following actions will be start off the process:

- **Renewal of the content of the Ecomuseum exhibition.** The permanent exhibition of the Ecomuseum, called 'The Ebro Delta', dates back to 1996 and consequently, it is necessary to renew its content. This action plan contemplates:
 - Renewal of the permanent Ecomuseum exhibition.
 - Replacement of the seats in the Ecomuseum's audiovisual room.
 - Remodelling the PNDE Ecomuseum aquarium. It will consist of the comprehensive improvement of the facilities with the relocation of the interpretative panels, the redesign of the horizontal and vertical layout of the aquariums so they are accessible for all (inclusive) and of the aquarium's central tank.
 - New lift for people with reduced mobility.
- **Completion of the adapted route of Els Ullals de Baltasar.**
- **Replacement of the existing facilities at El Fangar lookout dune.** Construction of an accessible dune lookout point for people with special needs that is integrated into the landscape (2020).
- **Renewal of the content of the exhibition at La Casa de Fusta.** The permanent exhibition 'The Reservoirs of the Delta' at La Casa de Fusta dates back to 1999, so, like the Ecomuseum, its interpretative content should be renewed:
 - Drafting of the executive project on the renewal of the permanent exhibition at La Casa de Fusta and its adjacent yard.
 - Execution of the project. The execution period and amount will depend on the result of the project.
 - Creation of a Birding Info Point. Included in the renovation work.
- **Georeferencing of PNDE bicycle route 10 'El Gran Delta'.**
- **Drafting of the executive project for a new lookout point at El Canal Vell Lagoon.**
- **Drafting of the executive project for a new lookout point of at La Punta de la Banya.** Access to La Banya lookout point must be gained on foot due to the condition of the sand track that leads to it. Users have to travel a distance of 1.5 km on foot. The action consists of moving the current lookout point to the end of track at El Trabucador and conditioning the area so it can be used in a more orderly and rational manner.
- **Installation of signage to indicate the Delta de l'Ebre Natural Park on the AP-7 motorway (junction 40 towards Barcelona).** The PNDE has the sign, but it has not been installed due to technical difficulties on the hard shoulder.
- **Maintenance and improvement of the public facilities and infrastructure of the PNDE by the park's maintenance crew.**
- **Improvement of the PNDE's interpretative and perimeter signage.**

The following will be undertaken at the same time, as and when the progress of the works permits:

- Monitoring of the work done.
- Dissemination of results on the PNDE website and in the local press.
- Communication by email to tourist companies accredited as Information Points of the PNDE and the companies adhered to the ECST so they can inform their customers.

Monitoring of the actions of the Nature Tourism Development Plan for Protected Natural Areas in Catalonia - NaturCAT2020, linked to the Ebro Delta:

- Action 7. Cataloguing of ecotourism facilities and routes.
- Action 8. Map and disseminate networks of special facilities for nature tourism.
- Action 9. Guide for the standardisation of the quality and maintenance of ecotourism facilities and routes.
- Action 10. Plan for the improvement of signage and visitor centres for their integration into the range of ecotourism options.

On a more general scale in the **Ebro Delta** the following actions mainly related to the planning of the road network and in particular to the Green Routes are planned to contribute alternatives to make the transport of agricultural machinery compatible with the safety of cyclists:

- Adaptation of a new section of El Baix Ebre Green Route (Tortosa-El Garxal) by Tarragona Coastal Service. It will be applied to the entire left side of the route from Tortosa to El Garxal, except in the sections that have already been constructed, making a total of 33 km.
- Rehabilitation and conditioning of a jetty on the River Ebro to prevent users from gaining access from any area and the degradation of plant life.
- Construction of a bike lane from La Casa de Fusta. Scheduled improvement work on 2 km of the road from La Casa de Fusta to Amposta will be taken advantage of to construct a bicycle lane and it will be continued in future improvement projects.
- Construction of a landscape observatory at the old Sant Antoni salt marches and construction of a parking area, which will be associated with the burial of the electricity line removed from the posts. Delta Lagoon LIFE Project.
- El Montsià Green Route Project to be developed in three sections (Roquetes - Vinallop - Amposta - Sant Carles de la Ràpita), the third of which is in the Ebro Delta.
- Installation of footbridges at Riumar to solve access problems and prevent environmental degradation.

MAINTENANCE AND OPTIMISATION OF EXISTING FACILITIES

Generally:

- Ensure the good state of repair of the current public facilities (routes, paths, lookouts, information points, recreational areas, interpretation centres, car parks, signage, etc.).
- Interpretation materials and activities. Message. Languages.
- Ensure that the facilities offer good service that satisfies the visitors.

TOPIC 4. Creation of ecotourism experiences and promotion

4.1. Knowledge of the Ebro Delta's tourism supply and demand

Justification

Much progress has been made in terms of knowledge of actual demand in the Ebro Delta thanks to the efforts of various bodies:

- The Foundation of the Science and Technology Park for Tourism and Leisure of Catalonia (PCTTO) has a statistical information system for tourism in the Tarragona regions that feeds the Observatory.
- The Tourist Board of Tarragona-Les Terres de l'Ebre Provincial Council has commissioned the PCTTO to conduct an annual study on the characterisation of tourism demand in the summer months.
(<https://goo.gl/zWDLLeH>)
- The tourism offices of the town councils compile data about their visitors and supply them to the Government of Catalonia's application.
- Tourism entrepreneurs facilitate employment data to the National Institute of Statistics (INE), which are also used by the Statistical Institute of Catalonia (Idescat).
- The PNDE compiles data about users of public facilities and the beneficiaries of guided services and environmental activities.
- The entrepreneurs adhered to the ECST are committed to providing the park with the results of their customer monitoring activities.

However, there continues to be a lack of coordination in these efforts, and in the processing and dissemination of their results. It is agreed that it is essential to have periodic, detailed information about tourism supply and demand in the Ebro Delta and to analyse the possibility of carrying out other specific studies.

Description

Unify the survey and the statistics on the visitors of all the information centres of the Parks of Catalonia, provided for by the Ecotourism Board, within the framework of the Nature Tourism Development Plan for Protected Natural Areas of Catalonia (Action 44. Implement the nature tourism in Catalonia observatory to obtain an annual report on the status of the sector). Once the survey has been unified in all the parks, it would be a question of unifying all or at least part of the content with the surveys of the Tourist Offices of the Ebro Delta.

Prepare an annual report on supply and demand in the Ebro Delta:

- Identify the parameters to be included in the report, taking into account the key subjects of the ECST, the sustainable tourism development objectives of the Ebro Delta, the 2017-2021 strategic lines, and the priority tourist products of the delta. These parameters should include the following:
 - Influx, distinguishing between visitors and tourists; distribution over time, source, number of nights and average stay.
 - Number of customers of natural and cultural value discovery activities.
 - Identify the entities that compile and analyse these data (level of disaggregation).
 - Establish a system to transfer information to the responsible body.
 - Take into account the content of the Annual Report on the State of the Nature Tourism Sector in Catalonia, provided for in the Nature Tourism Development Plan for Protected Natural Areas of Catalonia (Action 44) and make a comparison with other natural areas.
- Compile information and studies on **potential demand** in the Ebro Delta:
- Identify priority segments of demand in the Ebro Delta (by period, by product, etc.).

- Compile information and studies currently available on these segments.
- Establish a system to transfer information about potential demand to the body responsible for the action.

Prepare and/or compile **tourism studies on the Ebro Delta** (supply, actual demand and potential demand):

- Identify the tourism studies prepared so far, save them and place them at the disposal of the Forum.
- Identify themes and priority studies to be developed. Some of those already identified are:
 - Study on the volume of tourists, according to arrivals and overnight stays, in the whole of the Ebro Delta. In 2017 and 2020.
 - Study on the visitors to the Ebro Delta, characterisation, type and relationship with the natural environment (like the one undertaken in 2007) to assess the changes that have taken place in ten years (2007-2017).
 - Study of the demand profile of Les Terres de l'Ebre, outside the summer season (spring and autumn).
- Establish a system to transfer information to the party responsible for the action on tourism studies of interest to the Ebro Delta.

Prepare a **five-year report on the development of tourism supply and demand** in the Ebro Delta.

- Identify the content of the report (parameters, comparisons, etc.) and the party responsible for its preparation.

Disseminate the results:

- Create a space to save the tourism reports and studies on the Ebro Delta on the Ebro Delta ECST blog.
- Send information about new entries to the members of the FTSDE.
- Send the main conclusions of the reports and studies to the media and the FTSDE.

4.2. Development of ecotourism experiences in the Ebro Delta

Justification

The consolidation of ecotourism in the Ebro Delta inevitably includes the design of genuine experiences that allow visitors to discover something unique that often needs to be interpreted so it can be fully enjoyed. Committing to preserving and recovering the intrinsic resources of the Ebro Delta means publicising them in a structured manner. Resources like the culture of the delta, its gastronomy, the natural and landscape environment, a paradise for birds and lovers of bike tourism, in addition to a unique symbiosis between river, sea and land, are some of the elements that are proposed as experiences for the ecotourists visiting the area.

Description

The framework of the Nature Tourism Development Plan for Protected Natural Areas of Catalonia - NaturCAT2020 provides for a series of transversal actions for the generation of value in the design of ecotourism products related to natural areas.

These transversal actions include:

- Design experiences so they can be easily incorporated into the Catalogue/Guide of Ecotourism Experiences in the Natural Areas of Catalonia.
- The agents and entrepreneurs of the Ebro Delta should actively participate in workshops for the creation and exchange of shared ecotourism products.
- Become involved in campaigns aimed at tourism agents to form part of the ecotourism proposals of the Protected Natural Areas, particularly the Ebro Delta.

More specifically the following four ecotourism products will be developed in the Ebro Delta:

Development of the 'Deltaic Culture and Traditions' tourism product

RESOURCE

- Completion of the Inventory of Intangible Cultural Heritage of Les Terres de L'Ebre (www.ipcite.cat).
- Dissemination of the completed inventory to the FTSDE, local entities, inhabitants, tourism entrepreneurs and the general public.

FACILITIES

- Improve the dissemination of the current facilities, in addition to coordination between the centres.

SPECIALISATION OF THE DELTAIC CULTURE AND TRADITIONS PRODUCT

- Development of specialisation in the services of interested accommodation and activities companies and restaurants, in addition to advice on traditional culture for adaptation of interior and exterior spaces, the range of experiences associated with traditional activities, information for customers about the attractions of the traditional deltaic calendar in each period of the year.
- Identification and compilation on a list of all the tourism experiences to discover deltaic culture and traditions and where they are available. Creation of new experiences and their specific dissemination on the various Ebro Delta websites.

EXPERIENCE COMMERCIALISATION

- Monitoring of the results of experiences on deltaic culture and traditions placed on sale.

- Fostering of the commercialisation of experiences, directly and through travel agencies. These experiences can be combined with other activities in the delta (nature watching, gastronomy, etc.).

INFORMATION AND PROMOTION

- Include specific and complete information on the reference websites of the Ebro Delta that identifies all the points and activities of greatest interest on the culture and traditions of the Ebro Delta.

TRAINING AND AWARENESS

Design and teaching of the course on tourism based on the traditions of the Ebro Delta.

Development of the '4 metres of height difference: the Ebro Delta by bike' tourism product

COORDINATION

- Coordination between public administrations and public and private local organisations; e.g. in the case of signage, the bodies responsible for the road network, irrigation communities, etc. intervene.

FACILITIES AND SIGNAGE

- Continuation of the work and processes to ensure the interconnection and signage of the Cycling Network.
- Adaptation and georeferencing of bike route 10 of the PNDE 'El Gran Delta'.
- Identification of needs for rest areas on existing routes, with parking for bicycles, springs, tables and benches and shade trees, by the competent bodies.

AWARENESS TO IMPROVE ROAD SAFETY

- Complete the drafting, dissemination and adoption of a code of conduct for road safety in the Ebro Delta.

SPECIALISATION OF THE 4 METRES OF HEIGHT DIFFERENCE: THE DELTA BY BIKE PRODUCT

- Development of specialisation in the services of accommodation and restaurants such as bicycle loans; safe parking for bicycles; tool box and spare parts; space with a hose pipe to wash bicycles, first-aid kit.
- Public support for the renewal of the fleet of bicycles of the companies that provide services for bike tourism.
- Identification and compilation on a list of all the tourism experiences related to the product and where they are available. Specific dissemination of them all on the various reference websites of the Ebro Delta.

Development of the '350 delta birds' tourism product

COMPATIBILISATION OF ORNITHOLOGY TOURISM AND HUNTING

Raise awareness about traditional hunting in the delta, its economic and tourism benefits, the existence of regulations controlled by the PNDE and the work done on hunting and fauna management.

FACILITIES

- Creation of a “Birding Info Point” at La Casa de Fusta, when its exhibition content is renovated.

INFORMATION MATERIALS

Complete and distribute the map/brochure ‘How and when to see birds in the Ebro Delta’ on paper and digitally.

TRAINING

Foster training on all levels, from the staff of companies that offer ornithological routes and of public facilities and tourist offices to interested hotels and restaurants and municipal technicians, such as the free course IBERAVES organised by SEO/BirdLife.

SPECIALISATION OF THE 350 DELTA BIRDS PRODUCT

- Specialisation and thematisation of the interested hotels for the accommodation of ornithological tourists: library with availability of maps, guides, lists of birds in the delta, monitor and computer; reserved, quiet and comfortable space to consult books, record the day’s experiences in a travel log, watch videos, consult the internet; rent binoculars; flexibility in breakfast timetables, packs of food to eat in the countryside; creation of microhabitats in the garden to attract small birds; installation of a telescope; decorative elements, details on crockery, bed and bath linens, etc.

RANGE OF BIRD WATCHING ACTIVITIES, EVENTS AND EXPERIENCES IN THE EBRO DELTA

Consolidate a good range of activities related to birdwatching (e.g. Delta Birding Festival), both to foster birdwatching among inhabitants, entrepreneurs, administration technicians and visitors and to attract specialist and amateur ornithological tourists who are interested in discovering and learning more about this great value of the Ebro Delta.

Development of the ‘Delta cuisine: 5-star dishes’ tourism product

COORDINATION

- Continuation of coordination between local public administrations for the organisation of workshops and joint promotion.

TRAINING

- Teaching of advanced courses on the singular food products of the Ebro Delta (eel, duck, rice, seafood, fish, etc.): species, biological cycles, culinary and organoleptic qualities arising from their life or passage through the delta, optimal cooking, preparation options, etc.

SPECIALISATION OF THE DELTA CUISINE: 5 STAR DISHES PRODUCT

- Organisation of technical workshops on awareness and knowledge among restaurateurs and producers to work with market cuisine with veracity and transparency.

INFORMATION AND PROMOTION

- Publication of a catalogue of Ebro Delta agri-food products and producers, in addition to an online calendar with the main gastronomic events/festivals of Les Terres de l’Ebre.

Development of the ‘Ebro Sea Allies’ Nautical Ecotourism product

CODES OF CONDUCT

- Prepare specific codes of conduct for each nautical tourism subsector in the Ebro Delta: water sports, power boats, river navigation, tourism fishing, etc.

CREATION OF RESPONSIBLE NAUTICAL TOURISM PRODUCT

- Identification, design and creation of nautical ecotourism experiences based on the discovery and conservation of the natural and cultural values of the Ebro Delta. The following proposals could start the process:
 - Noble pen shell interpretation projects.
 - Birdwatching at sea.
 - Underwater cleaning with try dives.

ALLIES OF THE EBRO SEA PROGRAMME

- Foster the collaboration of the organisations and companies involved in the development of nautical tourism in the Ebro Delta with conservationist and territorial custody groups in order to implement initiatives that contribute to the marine and fluvial conservation and improvement of the delta.

4.3. Preparation of guidelines for the responsible promotion of El Delta de l'Ebre Natural Park

Justification

A variety of Ebro Delta promotion actions are developed by numerous organisations (Government of Catalonia, Tourist Board, regional councils, town councils, business associations, local tourism companies, travel agencies, etc.), but there is no single document that serves as a base or protocol for the responsible promotion of tourism in the Ebro Delta.

Description

Preparation of a document that, based on the key principles and subjects of the ECST, serves as a frame of reference for all promotion actions developed by the park's various collaborating organisations.

It will be a simple, practical document in digital format, which will promote companies and organisations that want to improve the promotion of their company or destination, also helping with the conservation of the Delta de l'Ebre Natural Park.

Its preparation will take into account the bad practices identified in the review of the informative and promotional materials. The guide will be suitably disseminated and distributed.

TOPIC 5. Training and awareness for sustainable tourism

5.1. Coordination and execution of a training programme for the tourism sector

Justification

In 2008, a study was conducted on training needs in the sector and a number of training actions were developed in accordance with the results. These training courses improved over time and became more specialist in nature. From 2012 to 2016 numerous courses and training days were developed for the private and public sectors, and it is considered necessary to continue working on them in the next few years.

Description

COORDINATION

- Coordinate the organisation and dissemination of the training actions for the tourism sector that are conducted in the territory.
- Share and assess the results of the developed training actions.
- Prepare an annual list of training actions for the tourism sector and communicate it to the FTSDE.
- Incorporate in every training programme a powerful, transversal environmental awareness component linked to the fragility of the wetlands that helps to understand the complexity of the delta.

EXECUTION

- Targets: tourism businesses and the public sector (technicians and managers); primary and secondary school teachers.
- Content based on the identification of training needs: office IT, languages, natural and cultural heritage, products with designation of origin, customer service, online marketing, specific training for rural accommodation and tourism accommodation.

Take into account the specific training actions related to the five priority tourism products.

- Resources:
 - Class time
 - Online training with technical advice
 - Visits and excursions
 - Debates

5.2. Park expert course and accreditation of PNDE guides

Justification

The Ecotourism Board and the Nature Tourism Development Plan for Protected Natural Areas of Catalonia - NaturCAT2020 started work in 2016 on the harmonisation of guides on protected natural areas in Catalonia. Since then, progress has been made on the design of a protected natural area guide training and accreditation system with a core element and a specific part for each protected natural area, which is known as 'Park Expert Course' applied to the Natural Parks of Catalonia. It is an initiative highly requested by the sector and by the protected natural areas to improve guide services in the areas and to be able to distinguish those that best meet their conservation and management objectives.

Additionally, given the singular characteristics of the Ebro Delta, it is considered absolutely necessary to provide training for professionals who are familiar with and can interpret the heritage and customs of the delta, as highlighted in the diagnostic study undertaken in 2007 and in various subsequent meetings.

Description

- Design and development of the '***Delta de l'Ebre Natural Park Expert***' course.
- Course for people, companies or bodies that develop or want to develop their professional activity in the protected natural area.
- Class time of 88 hours over three months.
- It will include:
 - Theory part: class time, analysis of cases of excellence, debates and discussion groups.
 - Practical part: visits to areas and facilities, excursions and heritage interpretation workshops.