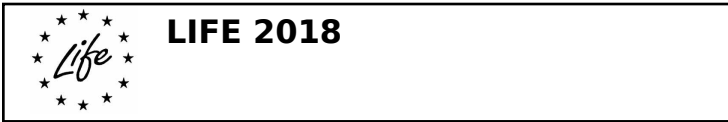




CONCEPT NOTE

LIFE Nature and Biodiversity

TECHNICAL APPLICATION FORMS



FOR ADMINISTRATION USE ONLY

LIFE18 NAT/PT/000866**LIFE Nature and Biodiversity project application****Language of the proposal:**

English (en)

Project title:

Stewardship network for the conservation of forest raptors in a human-dominated landscape

Project acronym:

LIFE Oeste Vivo

The project will be implemented in the following Member State(s) and Region(s) or other countries:

Portugal Lisboa e vale do Tejo

Expected start date: 15/07/2019**Expected end date:** 15/07/2024**LIST OF BENEFICIARIES**Name of the **coordinating** beneficiary: Sociedade Portuguesa para o Estudo das Aves**SECTOR**

Biodiversity

Coordinating Beneficiary Profile Information

Legal Name	Sociedade Portuguesa para o Estudo das Aves		
Short Name	SPEA	Legal Status	
VAT No	503091707	Public body	<input type="checkbox"/>
Legal Registration		Private commercial	<input type="checkbox"/>
Registration Date		Private non- commercial	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Pic Number			
Legal entity is SME	<input type="checkbox"/>		
Employee number			

Legal address of the Coordinating Beneficiary

Street Name and No	Avenida Columbano Bordalo Pinheiro, 87, 3º		
Post Code	1070-062	PO Box	
Town / City	Lisbon		
Member State	Portugal		

Coordinating Beneficiary contact person information

Title	Mr.	Function	Department Coordinator
Surname	Teodósio		
First Name	Joaquim		
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Department /	Terrestrial Conservation Department		
Street Name and No	Avenida Columbano Bordalo Pinheiro, 87, 3º		
Post Code	1070-062	PO Box	
Town / City	Lisbon		
Member State	Portugal		
Telephone No	351213220430	Fax No	351213220439

Website of the Coordinating Beneficiary

Website	http://www.spea.pt
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Brief description of the Coordinating Beneficiary's activities and experience in the area of the

SPEA is an Environmental NGO, created in 1993, whose mission is "to work for the study and conservation of birds and their habitats, promoting a development that guarantees the viability of the natural heritage for the benefit of future generations." It is the national partner of BirdLife International and currently has more than 3000 members and 500 volunteers. The network of technicians, amateur and professional ornithologists and volunteers is essential for the monitoring and research programs of bird species in Portugal, such as the Important Areas for Birds (IBA), and the Common Birds Census, which is the official indicator of nature conservation in Portugal.

SPEA's main objectives are: (1) Promote, promote and disseminate the study of bird biology and develop the scientific and technical bases for the application of management and conservation measures; (2) To promote the conservation of bird populations living in the wild and their habitats; (3) Contribute to the valuation and promotion of Ornithology, in its various aspects; and (4) To contribute to the training of the general population and specific groups on avifauna, ornithology and other activities related to bird watching, and to disseminate the importance of conservation of birds.

Throughout its history, it has been responsible for important conservation projects for birds and their habitats, some under the LIFE Program. In 2010, LIFE Priolo project was honoured with the Best of the Best Life and the LIFE Marine IBAs project was considered one of the Best Life. During 2007-2018, SPEA has surveyed and monitored Bonelli's eagle and other forest-dwelling raptors in the Oeste region such as the Northern goshawk, and designed and promoted voluntary conservation actions, which were applied by the stakeholders (mainly public administration, forestry, game and energy sectors) in breeding sites to mitigate

potential conflicts related to habitat degradation and human disturbance during the breeding season.

SUMMARY DESCRIPTION OF THE PROJECT (To be completed in English)**Description Of Species / Habitats / Biodiversity Issues Targeted By The Project:**

The Oeste region (north of Lisbon) is a highly humanized agro-forested landscape where diverse forest raptors survive (10 species, 6 Annex A-I species). Subsistence of these predators is fundamental for ecosystem balance, but they are at risk due to increased intensive human activities and the ever-changing landscape.

These changes are a consequence of the high economic importance of primary sector in the region which are a reflection of the situation that European landscapes face with globalization and the economic and environmental challenges associated with it; they are compromising the sustainability of landscapes and their associated natural values, and should be tackled in a comprehensive way.

Project actions form an integrated, cooperative conservation strategy that is structured under the emerging land stewardship concept to mitigate the major threats to raptor conservation: loss and degradation of known and (scarce) potential breeding sites (mainly by harvest and fires), disturbance during the breeding season, human-induced mortality (such as shot, poison, nest robbery), depletion of wild prey as a result of diseases and game management decline and lack of ecological knowledge, environmental education, and strategic land planning and management.

Due to its demanding breeding requirements and their potential as an umbrella for the raptor community, the project will focus on 2 species: the Bonelli's eagle (BE) – a Near Threatened, priority species in Europe, the apex predator and the most sensitive species – and the northern goshawk (NG) – a Least Concern species with decreasing trend in Europe (<25% in 21 years), and the most sensitive of the remainder forest raptors, which is also an indicator of raptor community health. Project actions directed to these 2 species will benefit all other 8.

Currently BE has a small population of 8 -11 breeding pairs (18 nests) in the region, which represents 0.7-1% of the European population and 9.9-14% of the Portuguese tree-nesting population.

The Oeste population is the only known to occupy highly humanized areas in Europe, showing a higher tolerance (but also higher vulnerability) to human activities, thus it is the only gene pool adapted to a likely scenario of continuous habitat humanization.

In the region BE nests at a minimum distance of 118m from inhabited houses mainly on large trees in unmanaged and/or ornamental stands.

Although the Portuguese tree-nesting southwestern population has been increasing, there are no evidences of a similar pattern in the Oeste. The productivity–0.80 juveniles/pair in average during 2007-2018–has been declining since 2013 until a low of 0.33 in 2018.

NG population size is unknown but SPEA's data suggest 40-84 breeding pairs (61 nests) in the region, which represents 0.02-0.10% of the European population and 9-17% of the estimated Portuguese population.

NGs have a higher plasticity and are less demanding than the breeding BEs: they can nest less than 100m from inhabited houses within diverse forest stands, including eucalyptus plantations where nesting-tree harvest is a regular threat. Available data indicates an average productivity of 1.6 to 2.1 juveniles/pair.

Project actions will contribute to tackle all the high priority recommendations of the Action Plans for the conservation of BE in Europe and the tree-nesting population in Portugal, but also to effectively protect the NG, despite the absence of national or European action plans to guide its conservation.

Project objectives:

This project aims to create the first regional stewardship network for nature conservation in Portugal focusing on an umbrella, flagship forest raptor species community surviving in a highly populated region (Oeste), namely the most sensitive species to human-related threats: the only Bonelli's eagle* population in Europe known to survive in highly humanized areas, and the northern goshawk population, a species with decreasing trend in Europe.

Public and private partners of this project are the first network members that will search for innovative, long-lasting, and cooperative solutions to reconcile biodiversity conservation with regional rural development, with an eye on its impact on socio-economy and ecosystem services and on its potential to be replicated and transferred to other regions of Portugal and Europe. Partners will implement primary conservation and awareness actions to mitigate major threats to these species and will test pilot actions to value the network members, but they will also act as enablers/facilitators for other pioneer actors such as landowners of breeding areas.

The implementation and valorisation of this network will benefit from the close assistance of two Spanish entities with renowned experience in social, legal and technical implementation and valorisation of land stewardship concept.

In particular, the project intends to:

- Protect raptors and forest habitats by: i) increasing the knowledge on their breeding sites and preserving them through long-term land stewardship agreements with landowners; ii) mitigating human-induced mortality, and iii) improving habitat management techniques that contribute to wild prey abundance and to breeding area's resilience to fire;
 - Educate, empower and encourage key stakeholders (such as landowners, land managers and users), school community, and general public to the protection of top predators and the benefits they provide
 - transform the community into guardian of their neighbouring natural values;
 - Generate long-term accountability among stakeholders but also value their conservation efforts;
 - Create, adjust and replicate an emerging conservation strategy with legal potential for land planning and management that will boost regional distinctiveness, competitiveness and sustainable economic development - create the network basis that will allow its perpetuation after the project's end.
- These objectives have the same importance since they represent integrated actions.

Actions and means involved:

- Survey and monitor Bonelli's eagle (BE) and northern goshawk (NG) with traditional and/or tagging techniques
- Start-up training sessions for the project team on nest identification and conservation, negotiation strategies with landowners and implementation/valorisation of stewardship networks by SPEA, SEO and Xarxa de Custòdia del Territori (XCT)
- Evaluate social perspectives on human coexistence with raptors from a representative sample of social groups
- Establish 20-year long land stewardship agreements with landowners of BE and NG breeding sites (250m and 125m around nests, respectively), municipalities and SPEA in order to maintain nests and avoid disturbance during the breeding season; one-off compensation payments
- Assess, test and promote pilot actions to value the network members with XCT and SEO guidance (such as tax benefits, non-financial benefits, green procurement, media coverage)
- Identify and contain threats related to human activities around BE and NG nests (under or out of agreements) and potential breeding sites during the breeding season by regular surveillance and management scheme (all partners)
- Plan, deploy and monitor harvest-exclusion buffers around nests in forest plantations and evaluate their minimum suitable size for effective protection, in order to inform conservation in dynamic habitats (including a peer-reviewed publication) and sustainability indicators/verifiers in forest certification by forestry partners
- Demonstrate fuel load management techniques to prevent fires in the most vulnerable BE and NG breeding sites by forestry partners
- Plan, correct and monitor power lines with anti-electrocution devices to avoid raptor mortality in BE territories by the national energy distribution company
- Demonstrate raptor- and game-friendly habitat management techniques and monitor their impact on prey in BE territories, in collaboration with Hunting Zones managers
- Enhance the capacity of the national environmental police force (partner) to fight environmental crime in the region for which it is insufficiently prepared, namely to mitigate poison threat
- Implement and monitor the anti-poisoning protocol and reinforce fight against wildlife crime in the region, particularly on BE territories, which includes monthly patrolling for toxic substances detection (e.g. poison) by a human-canine unit and a criminal investigation team, which will underpin criminal and legal actions during the project lifetime
- Evaluate the project impact on socio-economic and ecosystem services based on financial form (GDP, employment creation, etc.) and inquiries with quantifiable indicators of a representative sample of local stakeholders and public
- Carry out regular workshops/meetings with relevant stakeholders to discuss state-of-the-art, issues and adequate solutions on relevant topics to raptor conservation in highly humanized areas;
- Implement an extensive, regular environmental education programme about raptor conservation, with activity days for schools on all municipalities (22) and also classroom/field trips for schools in the 5 partner municipalities and in Sintra during 3 years
- Promote awareness activities for general public such as didactic raptor conservation weekends (including regional product fairs, talks, awareness trails), raptor conservation courses and live streaming nestcams
- Define guidelines and custom-tailored solutions for raptor conservation in humanized landscapes to integrate regional land-use planning and other public and/or private management instruments
- Develop a communication plan, including a website with updated project content, media coverage and sharing, international workshop, and networking with other LIFE projects
- Develop an expansion, replication and transfer plan to perpetuate and strengthen the stewardship network based on inquiries to all players involved in project actions and a SWOT analysis and other techniques (included in the After LIFE Plan)

- Coordinate, manage and monitor project's progress, including independent financial audit.
- SPEA will have a full-time team of 6 technicians: 1 project manager and 5 officers (2 conservation, 1 sociology/conflict mediation, 1 educational/communication and 1 administrative)
- Each partner will have 1-2 part-time officers to support project actions in their line of work
- A team of experienced volunteers will support several actions, namely nest survey
- External assistance: bird tagging expert, lawyer for environmental crimes, financial auditor, toxic substance analyst, fuel operators, game and land management companies, and XCT which will support the project team during the entire project and will boost synergies with LIFE ELCN, of which XCT is a beneficiary
- 4 vehicles (1 4WD) for field work, canine-unit transportation and crime investigation; 1 canine unit (3 dogs); laptops with GIS license; equipment for lab, tagging and survey/monitoring; requalification of storage unit for toxic substances and didactic materials

Is at least 25% of the eligible project costs dedicated to concrete conservation

Yes No

• Has this proposal been submitted before?

Yes No

LIFE17 NAT/PT/000617 LIFE Oeste Vivo.

The proposal was revised in order to meet the recommendations of the evaluation synthesis report.

The major improvements are:

- The project sustainability was improved by considering stewardship agreements with landowners, by raising the number of municipality partnerships, by including an expansion, replication and transfer plan of the stewardship network and other actions;
- The sample size of harvest-exclusion buffers was increased to the minimum statistically acceptable to obtain significant results (30)
- GNR (environmental police force) partnership addresses the environmental crime issue
- ICNF partnership confirms the commitment from the competent authority in the conservation of the target species
- Awareness activities to key stakeholders and for school community were greatly improved
- SEO/BirdLife partnership and Xarxa de Custòdia del Territori (as external assistance), two entities with wide experience in the implementation and promotion of land stewardship networks, increase the potential of transnationality and replicability
- Consistency and transparency of technical and budget forms was increased
- Ambitious expected results strongly increase the conservation value of the project.

Expected results (outputs and quantified achievements):

- Engage 16 enablers/facilitators (central and regional administration, environmental police force, public and private sector) and at least 51 landowners in the foundation of a regional stewardship network for forest raptor conservation, which will protect nests and decrease disturbance during the breeding season for the entire Bonelli's eagle (BE)* population (8 occupied territories) and more than 70% of the estimated northern goshawk (NG) population (84 occupied territories)
- Establish long-term land stewardship agreements in at least 200ha around all 18 known BE nests and 44ha around 12 NG nests; and implement harvest-exclusion buffers in at least 24ha around 30 NG nests in forest plantations
- Implement a long-term monitoring, surveillance and management scheme that detects and contains disturbance events during the breeding season around all BE and NG nests under agreements and harvest-exclusion buffers, and in 18 more NG nests in source territories (higher productivity and stability)
- Increase by 50% the number of occupied BE territories (to 12)
- Increase by 25% and 20% BE and NG productivity (to 1 and 2.5 juveniles/pair, respectively)
- Implement a community-oriented policing to prevent environmental crime based on 216 patrolling missions
- Correct 100 most dangerous pylons of powerlines in BE territories to mitigate electrocution
- Increase responsible rural management by improving habitat resilience to fire in at least 200ha around 11 BE nests and 170ha around 9 NG nests located within areas of high fire risk in the region; and by demonstrating raptor- and game-friendly habitat management techniques in 1500ha of 5 BE territories
- Identify minimum suitable size of harvest-exclusion buffers for effective protection of NG nests in forest plantations

- Promote 44 meetings with stakeholders to debate issues and solutions to raptor conservation in highly humanized areas, including on land stewardship, forestry, agricultural and game management, nature conservation on smallholdings, environmental crime and education and tourism, directed to public administration, agro-forestry and hunting sectors, law enforcement, tourism operators and teachers
- Implement 114 raptor awareness activities reaching 5000 people through diverse communication media, including 22 school groups (6 regularly engaged)
- Evaluate social perspectives on human coexistence with predators and the project's impact on socio-economy and ecosystem services
- Develop an expansion, replication and transfer plan to perpetuate and strengthen the network
- Design guidelines to preserve raptor breeding in human-dominated landscapes, including according to the European Land Conservation Network concept and sustainability indicators/verifiers for European forest certification schemes
- Design custom-tailored solutions for entities engaged in project's conservation actions, including for 5 Municipal Master Plans and 10 Forest Management Plans

Sustainability of the Project Results:

- Land stewardship agreements for a 20-year commitment are the cornerstone of conservation actions' sustainability; municipalities and ICNF—which administrative areas comprise all known BE nests and several NG nests—are directly responsible for assisting the landowners in the implementation of conservation measures and will continue to do it in collaboration with SPEA after the project's end
- After project completion, all partners will maintain the long-term monitoring, surveillance and management scheme that detects and contains potential disturbance events during the breeding season around all BE and NG nests under surveillance during the project, based on the acquired structure and experience and despite the expected significant decrease in threat by the end of the project due to the high effort spent on stakeholder awareness and capacitation; new territories and vulnerable nests and species may be added to this scheme during the project and afterwards
- Stakeholders' capacitation and motivation to consider raptor conservation as a routine task in the long term with potential impact at the regional and national levels will be boosted by: i) increased access of land owners, managers and users to technical guidance, ii) evaluation and test of new conservation tools to value network actors, enablers and facilitators with XCT guidance, iii) policymakers engagement considered during the project, iv) stakeholder's networking with other peers, including ones engaged on successful European stewardship networks, v) regular participation of stakeholders (public administration, forestry, agriculture and hunting sectors, law enforcement, nature tour operators), school community and general public in awareness/educational activities which are expected to change perceptions on biodiversity values, and v) demonstration actions of raptor- and game-friendly habitat management and training of stakeholders' on nest identification and conservation, negotiation strategies, implementation and valorisation of stewardship networks;
- General guidelines, custom-tailored solutions and indicators/verifiers for certified areas will provide the basic technical knowledge for raptor conservation in human-dominated landscapes, including on forest plantations (i.e. close-to-market approach), in order to facilitate the integration of conservation measures on routine decision making and in land planning and management instruments, but also its application and/or adjustment to other similar contexts worldwide
- The network's replication and transfer plan will have the guidance of Spanish entities' (SEO, XCT) with wide experience on this conservation strategy, which will boost its potential to be strengthened and perpetuated in the long term nationally (e.g. BE population in southern Portugal) and internationally, namely to be expanded to other biodiversity values; this plan will evaluate funding opportunities and legal procedures for network's formal constitution as an organization

The proposal addresses the following project topic(s):

- Development and application of tools aimed at integrating biodiversity into financial and business decisions so as to ensure, through the conservation and restoration of biodiversity carried out during the project, no net loss of biodiversity and/or enhanced income delivering ecosystem services.

Reasons why the proposal falls under the selected project topic(s):

This project aims to adjust and apply an emerging conservation strategy—the land stewardship—to raptor conservation in humanized areas, which has its basis on generating accountability among stakeholders; this accountability facilitates and enforces the integration of conservation measures in technical and financial decisions. For example, land stewardship agreements that will be celebrated among landowners of breeding sites, municipalities and SPEA are one of the direct tools that will

facilitate the integration of the conservation areas and measures into land planning and management instruments such as Municipal Master Plans; in forest plantations harvest-exclusion buffers are another tool to preserve breeding raptors that can be integrated in the next revisions of Forest Management Plans (e.g. close-to-market approach); sustainability indicators for raptor conservation in those dynamic habitats (that will be drawn from buffer tests) are also tools that can be integrated in forest certification schemes (market tools per se).
This accountability, reflected on the conservation actions carried out during the project, guarantees long term protection of the vulnerable BE population (nests and gene pool) and key NG territories.

Project Partnership

The already solid project partnership comprises the major regional stakeholders (16 partners) in raptor conservation: national nature conservation authority, national police force, 5 municipalities, 2 public entities, 2 private forestry companies, 2 non-profit organizations (NPO) for forest management/certification, 1 private energy company, 1 Portuguese and 1 Spanish NPO for bird conservation.

SPEA (project coordinator) will act in all actions; it has the holistic knowledge on species' occurrence and their threats in the region.

The 5 municipalities' administrative areas (Alenquer, Loures, Mafra, Torres Vedras, Vila Franca de Xira) and ICNF cover all known BE and several NG nests (mainly outside protected areas); they will support the negotiation strategy with owners, and will continue to monitor them and human activities around nests after the project ends.

SPEA, municipalities and PSML will jointly perform environmental education in schools.

PSML and TNM (public entities) own 3 BE and several NG nests and will be engaged in their conservation by stewardship agreements without financial offset.

Altri and Navigator are the major private pulp and/or paper production companies in Portugal; they own/manage plantations with nests in the region where they will implement harvest-exclusion buffers without financial offset.

APAS is a regional forestry NPO that will promote nest conservation within its limits.

AGFR is an NPO that promotes responsible forest management and international certification, and will support the identification of sustainability indicators of raptor conservation.

AGFR, Altri, APAS, Navigator and PSML will disseminate best practices on forest management for raptor conservation.

Altri, APAS, Navigator, PSML, TNM, Alenquer and Mafra municipalities will manage fuel loads in the most vulnerable BE and NG breeding sites.

EDP Distribuição is the electrical distributor in Portugal and will correct the most dangerous pylons.

GNR is the national environmental police force; it will fight environmental crime by implementing community-oriented policing focused on poison detection.

SEO is the Spanish partner of Birdlife and it has a wide experience in land stewardship network; it will support negotiation strategy, socio-economic and ecosystem services assessment, and promote synergies with LIFE Nature Guardians.

All partners will i) take part in the long-term monitoring, surveillance and management scheme for breeding sites; ii) participate in awareness workshops for knowledge exchange; iii) contribute with ideas to guide raptor conservation, to value the stewardship network and to the post-LIFE strategy that will expand the network.

The political situation in Catalonia hindered the partnership of XCT, an organization with wide experience in stewardship networks and a LIFE ELCN beneficiary, however an external assistance was considered.

The project will be co-financed by partners' own contributions and by other funds for which SPEA and partners will apply.

Expected Constraints and Risks Related to the Project Implementation and Mitigation Strategy

- The high number of human resources implies a large influence of logistic and administrative work, thus it is considered a solid technical team with experience in human resources and a clear annual set of work and objectives, but also regular and well planned meetings of the executive commission, and constant monitoring and regular updates of action's progress; although a large partnership, policymakers' involvement will strengthen relationships with owners and the partnership will also create a platform to work regulatory procedures for stewardship networks in Portugal, which does not exist;

- Land stewardship agreements with private landowners may not be signed because they depend on openness and willingness to adhere. It will be mitigated by: an experienced technician in conflict mediation with sociology background working full-time on negotiation; agreements do not imply landowner's extreme behavioural changes; payments awarded to landowners may compensate the

long-term compromise; the intensive environmental awareness and educational programme in the region will help inform landowners about the importance of predator conservation and will ease the process along the project; the 10 year work and contacts of SPEA's in the region may facilitate contacts with stakeholders

- The fast-changing landscape, namely the fast-growing infrastructure network, may hinder the detection of potential conflicts, particularly for areas around nests under land agreements and for nests not targeted for land agreements; a specific action of surveillance, detection and control is considered to deal with this situation, where regular contacts with landowners and major land managers will be implemented as well as regular checks of public consultations on infrastructure's environmental impact assessment and other public information resources; regular presence in the field and nest monitoring will also collect relevant information

- Weather conditions, wild fires, drought and diseases of wild prey (VHD2) are common, uncontrollable risks that may hinder project's actions (particularly field work) and project's results, such as birds' productivity and prey abundance; however surveillance and best forest management practices may decrease the risks.

Best Practice/Demonstration Character/Pilot Aspects: of the Project

This project has a best practice character because it applies cost-effective, state-of-the-art methods to i) manage habitat to boost wild prey by installing/rehabilitating water and food points, providing artificial shelters for rabbits, creating cereal crops for partridges, among others; ii) correct powerlines to mitigate raptor electrocution by insulation the conductor cables of the pylon), iii) increase nesting opportunities by installing artificial platforms in potential breeding sites, iv) assess survival of Bonelli's eagle juveniles by tagging them with GSM/GPS, v) detect and control conflict events in breeding sites by regular surveillance and management of human activities around nests; these methods will be monitored during the project.

This project also has a demonstration character because it i) applies the land stewardship concept to predator conservation in human-dominated landscapes, particularly of a European priority species, which is an emerging conservation strategy in Europe and has never been tested in Portugal at the regional level (only locally and as a secondary objective); ii) tests the efficacy of stewardship agreements with financial compensation for landowners of breeding sites on a highly humanized and dynamic region, which has never been applied in the region; iii) tests the efficacy of public and private collaborations for nature conservation outside protected areas in human-dominated landscapes; iv) integrates social sciences in conservation, such as the assessment of social perspectives on human coexistence with raptors (as predators) in a human-dominated region and the engagement of a full-time sociology/conflict mediator officer that will negotiate the stewardship agreements, which has never been done in the region and can provide unique and important contributions to conservation practice and outcomes; v) tests the promotion of forest plantation heterogeneity to create alternative patches with similar breeding conditions so birds may migrate between areas and continue breeding without major drawbacks taking advantage of small/medium-sized raptors' dynamic nest occupation; this is not being done at an integrated level and it is strategic for conservation in highly dynamic habitats since maintenance of nests for longer periods than the common harvesting cycle may not be feasible in forested areas with economic value (however there is an opportunity to consider these areas in certified forest plantations under the 10% rule for conservation purposes); vi) applies fuel load management methods (such as patch/shrub clearing, prescribed burning, livestock grazing) in favour of biodiversity conservation, namely the protection of breeding sites against fires; vii) activates the anti-poisoning protocol in the region, where it has never been applied; these methods will be monitored, evaluated and the successful results will be disseminated.

This project also has a pilot character because it identifies the minimum suitable size of harvest-exclusion buffers around nests for effective protection of NG reproduction in forest plantations, mainly eucalyptus, which is currently unknown since buffer sizes were usually studied at Northern European forests that are different from the Iberian ones in ecological and management terms; the sustainability indicators/verifiers for raptor conservation in forest plantations that will be identified and proposed for integration in forest certification schemes (as a result of the tests) does not currently exist at national or international level; these indicators may be replicated across European Mediterranean countries whenever forest plantations exist (particularly eucalyptus, which cover 1.3 million hectares in the Iberian Peninsula, France and Italy) and whenever raptors are taking advantage of these highly dynamic habitats.

EU Added Value of the Project and its Actions

The project contributes to:

- EU Biodiversity Strategy to 2020 because it:

- i) aims to achieve sustainable rural development and forestry outside Natura 2000 by creating a stewardship network that engages and empowers stakeholders on the conservation of raptors in a agro-forested, highly populated landscape, particularly by means of land stewardship agreements
- ii) improves the knowledge base for the implementation, evaluation and impact monitoring of EU nature and biodiversity policy and legislation
- iii) applies direct conservation measures to protect breeding sites and avoid population decline of a conservation priority species and a species with a negative trend in Europe
- iv) encourages forest and nest owners to protect and enhance biodiversity conservation with regional, national and European impact, given the relevance of this peculiar BE population
- v) directly improves forest management in the region (management of human activities around nests, harvest-exclusion buffers in forest plantations, fuel load management in areas with high fire risk) and proposes to integrate biodiversity measures in forest management plans and to generate indicators for forest certification schemes
- vi) promotes sustainability of an important economic sector-forestry-in Portugal and Europe, which represents 1.6% of the GDP and 6.7% of the exports of goods and services in Portugal

vii) assess the state of ecosystems and their services and economic value

viii) encourages up-front investments in green infrastructure, since the Municipal Ecological Structures currently holds several breeding sites

ix) demonstrates best practices on raptor- and game-friendly habitat management, which contributes to halter land abandonment trend

- Birds Directive by promoting the conservation of a raptor community that includes 6 Annex A-I species
- EU Action Plan for Bonelli's eagle by applying diverse recommendations and by mitigating several threats for the species in Portugal
- EU Adaptation to Climate Change through the improvement of ecological resilience of forests to fire and other climate-related events
- EU Forest Strategy by "maintaining biodiversity, productivity, regeneration capacity, vitality and potential of habitats in order to fulfil, now and in the future, relevant ecological, economic and social functions, at local, national, and global levels in a way that does not cause damage to other ecosystems"
- EU Rural Development Policy since it fosters innovation in forestry, enhances forest ecosystems and promotes economic development and valorisation of rural areas
- Convention on Biological Diversity by promoting the conservation of umbrella top predators and by targeting the only known gene pool of the European BE population adapted to a likely scenario of continuous humanization
- European Land Conservation Network by learning with the current LIFE ELCN and the previous LANDLIFE in order to replicate the concept, tools and models and apply new ones that fit the regional context

Budget breakdown cost categories	Total cost in €	Eligible Cost in €	% of total eligible costs
1. Personnel	1,408,997	1,408,997	48.43%
2. Travel and subsistence	242,797	242,797	8.34%
3. External assistance	642,870	642,870	22.09%
4. Durable goods			
Infrastructure	30,000	30,000	1.03%
Equipment	163,076	161,276	5.54%
Prototype	0	0	0.00%
5. Land	121,300	121,300	4.16%
6. Consumables	20,575	20,575	0.70%
7. Other costs	114,195	114,195	3.92%
8. Overheads	167,310	167,310	5.75%
Total	2,911,120	2,909,320	100.00%

Contribution breakdown	In €	% of total	% of total eligible costs
EU contribution requested	2,181,990	74.98%	75.00%
Coordinating Beneficiary's contribution	253,459	8.71%	
Associated Beneficiaries' contribution	474,321	16.30%	
Co-financers contribution	0	0.00%	
Total	2,909,770	100.00%	