



EUROPEAN LANDSCAPE CONVENTION
LANDSCAPE AWARD OF THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE

4th Edition – 2014-2015

APPLICATION FORM

I. STATE CONCERNED AND APPLICANT

1. State

Spain

Represented by

Address:

Tel.:

E-mail:

General Subdirection of Rural Development
Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Environment
C/ Gran Vía de San Francisco, 4
28005 Madrid
+ 34 91 347.84.53
sgfdmr@magrama.es

2. Applicant

*Name of the local,
regional authority (ies) or NGO(s)*

Represented by

Address:

Tel.:

E-mail:

Taula del Sénia Commonwealth
Mrs Maria Teresa Adell Pons (Director)
Plaza Sant Miquel, 3
12300 – Morella (Castellón)
+34 608665504
gerencia@tauladelsenia.org

II. PRESENTATION OF THE PROJECT

3. Name of the Project

THE SÉNIA TERRITORY MILLENNIUM OLIVE TREE LANDSCAPE

4. Location of the Project

The Sénia Territory has 116,000 inhabitants and covers an area of 2,070 km². It consists of 27 towns (15 in the Valencian Community: Benicarló, Càlig, Canet lo Roig, Castell de Cabres, Cervera del Maestre, Herbés, La Jana, Morella, La Pobla de Benifassà, Rossell, San Rafael del Río, Sant Jordi / San Jorge, Traiguera, Vallibona y Vinaròs; 9 in Catalonia: Alcanar, Freginals, La Galera, Godall, Mas de Barberans, Sant Carles de la Ràpita, Santa Bàrbara, La Sénia and Ulledecona; and 3 in Aragon: Beceite / Beseit, Peñarroya de Tastavins / Pena-roja de Tastavins y Valderrobres / Vall de Roures), all found at the intersection of the 3 ancient kingdoms of the Aragon Crown (Valencian Community, Catalonia and Aragon).

5. Summary of the Project (10 lines)

Among other things (geography, history, language and culture), it is the conservation of some 4,800 ancient olive trees (those with a trunk circumference of over 3.5m at 1.30m above the ground) which unites and characterises the Sénia Territory. Almost all of them are of the Farga variety (the oldest variety and with a high quality oil, but with a low production) and are part of a traditional variety olive tree landscape known as "the sea of olive trees." This landscape, where the millenary olive trees are found in a setting of olive groves and traditional farming systems, terraced fields and dry stone constructions, together with a unique flora and fauna, is an excellent example of the interaction of natural and human factors (European Landscape Convention). Thanks to collaboration from public and private sectors, good results have come from programs that have been implemented to enhance the intrinsic value of the millenary olive trees and their environment.

6. Photo representing the Project (high definition – JPEG 350 dpi) and name of the author of the photo please



III. CONTENT OF THE PROJECT

7. **Start of the Project** month year
The project must have been completed three years previously

8. **Partners**
- | |
|---|
| <p>Taula del Sénia Commonwealth (CIF P4300069D)
Local Associations Register nº 0543014 (20/2/2006)
Sénia Territory Association (CIF G12771002)
National Association Register nº 589462 (27/09/2007)</p> |
|---|

9. **Financing bodies**
- | |
|---|
| <p>European Union
Spanish Government
Autonomous Regions: Catalonia, Valencian Community and Aragon
Province of Tarragona and Teruel
Biodiversity Foundation</p> |
|---|

10. Central aims of the Project

- | |
|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Conserve and protect the olive trees, their environment and landscape.- Ensure that the olive trees contribute to sustainable territorial development in the area- Give value to the landscape, heritage and cultural of these ancient olive trees.- To produce only certified millenary olive tree oil of supreme quality, and improve the other traditional oil varieties from the area.- Establish synergies with other sectors (restaurant industry, tourism, trade, etc.)- Establish collaborative networks about the Sénia Territory Ancient Olive Trees Landscape. |
|--|

11. Outcome

- | |
|---|
| <p>- Greater awareness of the owners in particular, but also among people of the territory.
Local farmers have found that instead of selling their olive trees for cash, by producing high quality and better paid olive oils they can start to reap the benefits of this unique and exceptional world heritage as well as one day pass it on to their heirs. Even some olive trees that had been abandoned for years have been put back into production, partly due to the economic crisis but also thanks to this project.</p> <p>- Natural Museums, Interpretation Areas and Millenary Olive Tree Routes. Thanks to agreements set up with farmers, land owners, olive oil mills and municipalities, two millenary olive tree natural museums have been established: the Arion in Uldecona (Tarragona) and the Pou del Mas in La Jana (Castellón). Focus has been on places with the highest concentration of ancient trees and so through the combined efforts of Alcanar (Tarragona), Canet lo Roig and Vinaròs (Castellón) municipalities, 3 visiting areas have been organized on easily accessible lands. Following that, further agreements were made with landowners and other municipalities resulting in the creation of 3 more visiting areas in</p> |
|---|

La Senia, Ulledecona and Godall. Information at the sites is presented in 3 languages (Spanish, Catalan / Valencian and English) and access is free except for the Arion museum which can only be visited by guided tour available through the Ulledecona Tourism Office, all of which has resulted in a noticeable increase in interest and the number of visitors.

With assistance from the Catalanian Government, the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Environment and the ESF, 65km of walking and cycling routes have been signposted within Catalonia and the same is expected to be carried out shortly in the other territories.

Through these different programs awareness of the ancient olive tree landscape in the Senia Territory has grown. Care has been taken to avoid indiscriminate visits (that create conflict with the farmers) and to offer the best and most accessible places for the public to visit as examples of well conserved olive trees in their natural environment: dry stone terraced fields and a very unique flora and fauna adapted to the area.

- Certified olive oil made exclusively from monumental olive trees and implementation of improvements to other traditional olive oil varieties.

To a greater extent over the last few centuries the Farga variety olive tree (the oldest variety and one giving some of the highest quality oil) was replaced with more productive types such as the Morruda, the Sevilleana, the Empeltre etc. but all of which give lesser quality oil. The olives were generally harvested from the ground where they had naturally fallen and this produced poor quality oil that needed refining.

Therefore, following the advice of renowned specialists, significant improvements have been made to the production processes, the harvesting methods used, the transport of the picked olives, the processing and storage, as well as the system of conservation of the finished oil itself: for both ancient olive trees oils, as well as for single variety olive oils or controlled blends of these. Over these last years the number of mills producing olive oil from millenary olive trees has gone from 1 to now 8 in total. Of the 8 mills, 4 are Catalan and the other 4 are Valencian (comprised of 6 cooperatives and 2 private mills). Finally, under the guidance of IRTA and the Alicia Foundation, a 9th mill is soon to be operating (in the Aragon area) in addition to the original 8, handling the production of the recently launched Via Augusta Olive Oil. This new product is a controlled blend of 4 of the traditional varieties of olives from the area and aspires to be the essence of the Senia Territory.

- Cooperation agreements with the best restaurants in the area.

All of the restaurants involved in the project have developed special recipes that use millenary olive tree oil, bought from 1 of the 8 mills in the Sénia Territory and which have been incorporated into their menus as well as being published in the book "Gastronomic Guide Millennium Olive Oil from Territori del Sénia". A new book has just been released with a similar concept, titled "VIA AVGVSTA Oil, at the Heart of the Sénia Territory". The prologue has been written by Joan Roca (Celler Can Roca) and the book also includes contributions from other significant collaborators.

Campaigns have been made in the local produce specialty stores and in other specialty stores elsewhere like La Boqueria and Santa Caterina in Barcelona, or at the Valencia AVE train station and through events like "The Taste of the Rambla" held by the Catalan Academy of Gastronomy, for example.

- Activity over a multiregional territory together with both public and private collaborators.

Despite the many things that unite these towns and their people, the issue of belonging to 3 different Autonomous Communities, was at first, not so easy. But on the other hand, one of the benefits of being transregional is that this has facilitated Governmental collaboration and, secondly, all sides have been able to discover and adopt valuable know-how and experience from the other side which has then been applied back home. Likewise it is

noteworthy the collaboration from both public and private sectors. On the one hand, the Commonwealth, the municipalities and the other state authorities in the public sector that are subject to a set of rules and regulations. However through the Senia Territory Association (made up 50% by the Commonwealth and 50% by economic and social sectors in the area) it has been possible to work with many different private sectors (land owners, mills, restaurants, tourism), cultural and social entities (research centers, universities, institutions and environmental conservation associations, other private partners, etc.), all of which has improved the results of the entire undertaking.

- A travelling exhibition of Ancient Olive Trees from the Senia Territory.

30 folding panels measuring 200x80cm showing 100 spectacular photographs of the most monumental olive trees. Besides touring all the municipalities in the area, this exhibition has travelled to Tarragona, Valencia, Altea ... and has a full agenda of scheduled visits.

- Scientific congresses and conference days on the subject of the Ancient Olive Trees and their oils.

Since 2011, 4 conferences have been held. Among the speakers were leading specialists from Spain and other countries. The conferences have also served as platforms for presenting that year's new harvest of millenary olive tree oils and single variety olive oils from the region as well as a backdrop for the Exhibition and other publications on the subject.

Specifically the 4th conference, held this past November, was titled "Millenary Olive Trees of the Senia Territory – a landscape full of history and with a great future".

- Studies and scientific papers.

Besides keeping a complete and up to date registry of the millenary olive trees in the Sénia Territory, the Alicia Foundation published Gastronomy of Millenary Olive Tree Oils; Cooking with Traditional Varieties from the Sénia Territory. IRTA (A Catalan Government Research Centre) published studies investigating both the genotype of the ancient olive trees as well as the quality of the oils produced including the other traditional varieties. Other publications have also been made suggesting walking routes through the millenium olive trees and describing their natural environment and the surrounding landscape.

- Diffusion and promotion.

Publications such as: "Millenary Olive Trees, Living Monuments", "A Food Guide to the Ancient Olive Tree Oil of the Sénia Territory", "Olea europaea 'Farga'" with a prologue by Federico Mayor Zaragoza, "Cooking with Traditional Varieties of Olive Oils from the Senia Region" with a foreword by Ferran Adrià and "VIA AGUSTA Oil, al the Heart of the Senia Territory" with a prologue by the Chef, Joan Roca. In addition to these there have been many articles in the press (ABC, El Mundo, El Periódico, La Vanguardia, Ara, Levante, Rural Development, Descubrir, GEO, Olivarama, ph85 magazine, etc.) as well as television programs (TVE-1 and 2, Tele 5, Antena 3, TV3, Channel 9, Aragón TV) and videos ("Oil and Ancient Olive Trees" and "The Anceint Olive Trees of the Arion Museum").

webs: www.tauladelsenia.org/index.php?id=2 www.aceiteolivomilenarios.com,

redes sociales: www.facebook.com/aceiteolivomilenarios.territoriosenia,

<https://twitter.com/olivomilenario>

- Awards and Recognition.

We have received 5 awards from the Spanish Olive Municipalities Association (AEMO), 3 for the most monumental olive trees in Spain and 2 for the promotion of olive tree cultivation, a Diploma of Honor from the Mediterranean Diet Foundation, China Innovation SIAL prize for the Acomont millenary olive oil, Hispania Nostra Foundation award from the Banco Santander for "Heritage Conservation as a Factor for Economic and Social Development" and finally, the European Union award for Cultural Heritage / Europa Nostra for "A Cultural Landscape of Ancient Olive Trees in the Senia Territory" (Aragon,

Catalonia and Valencia).

- **Sponsors** (Oriol Romeu) and **Ambassadors** (Juan Echanove, Federico Mayor Zaragoza, María Galiana, Pepa Fernández and Vicente del Bosque).

- We have presented the work “A Cultural Landscape of Ancient Olive Trees in the Senia Territory”, (Aragon, Catalonia and Valencia) to be included in the **National Plan for Cultural Landscapes** set up by 3 Autonomous Communities.

- In addition to the mills and the restaurants, collaborative networks have been launched, inspired by the subject of the millenary olive tree landscape; including investigation teams, tourism technicians and institutions.

IV. RESPECT OF THE CRITERIA OF THE ATTRIBUTION OF THE AWARD

12. Sustainable territorial development

Is the project part of a sustainable development policy?

Does it contribute to the enhancement of environmental, social, economic, cultural or aesthetic values of the landscape? How?

Has it successfully countered or posed remedy to any pre-existing environmental damage or urban blight? How?

The “Sénia Territory Millennium Olive Tree Landscape” project is fully adapted to the policy of sustainable development based on a balanced and harmonious relationship between social needs, economical needs and the environment (as stipulated by the European Landscape Convention).

Born from the concern of the local people watching how monumental trees, true living monuments, were ripped up to be replaced by intensive citrus crops or olive plantations of foreign varieties, thus changing the cultivation methods and consequently the surroundings and landscape. During the economic boom, the trees were even extracted only for ornamental use in roundabouts or for luxurious country houses, leaving the farm a ruin and the landscape totally degraded. So the Taula del Sénia Commonwealth conducted a rigorous inventory of all the ancient olive trees in the area, which gave an initial figure of over 4,080 olive trees all of which had more than 3.5m trunk circumference, measured from 1.3mt above ground level. This figure has now grown to 4,800 trees as many owners themselves have begun requesting that their trees be measured and classified.

With these figures, the Taula del Sénia Commonwealth (municipalities only) and the Taula del Sénia Territory Association (comprising 50% Senia Taula members and 50% private sector members - the mills, restaurants, tourism, etc.) requested and obtained a significant grant for the pilot project "Olive Oil and Millenary Olive Trees, an engine for sustainable development in the Sénia Territory" which has been the basis and starting point for all the other related activities. These have not just been empty words in a fancy title but rather all the developments have been oriented in this way: conservation of olive trees, not only the ancient trees but also the traditional varieties, together with conservation of the local environment and landscape. By creating added value, the fruits of their efforts (the olive oils, oleo-tourism, restaurants ...) are enjoyed by a wide majority of the local people and this in turn, helps to strengthen all the values of the landscape.

Thanks to the project, the olive trees, the surrounding area and the environment have all

benefited. Through the participation of all involved (land owners, mills, restaurants, among others) more collaboration and social cohesion has been achieved and the economic results are encouraging. The cultural interest is expanding, from museums, to publications and exhibitions, all of which will eventually lead to preservation of the aesthetics of this landscape, which can be appreciated by the reader in the selection of pictures here accompanying.

As far as preventing or lessening anymore environmental degradation, in general terms the project has helped to avoid further extraction of monumental olive trees and also, as we have already stated, contributed to abandoned farms that had been lying uncultivated for years, have been put back into production. All of which benefits the surrounding areas and the landscape.

13. Exemplary value

Can the project be considered of exemplary value? Why?

Which are the good practices that it implemented?

Among the reasons why this project can be considered exemplary we would like to highlight the following:

- This is an exceptional heritage, unique in the world, ancient and monumental. 4,800 classified millenary olive trees, scattered throughout 22 municipalities within the Sénia Territory, endangered by economic pressure (relatively low production) and speculation (sale and uprooting of some of the most stunning examples for luxury ornamental uses).

- This has created great concern among the local people and has required an answer at a governmental level (through the Senia Taula Commonwealth and the Municipalities), but also from individuals (olive oil mills and land owners) who have joined forces and are working together to try and possibly stop this detrimental process. Everyone is working to have the value of this monumental heritage recognized on an international level by spreading knowledge and appreciation of it's value all over the world. Only in this way can there be an improved economic return and thus we can ensure their survival.

- The Sénia Territory is split between three autonomous regions; Aragon, Catalonia and Valencia, although the largest concentration of trees is found in the midland plains between the provinces of Castellon and Tarragona. The project is therefore, multiregional and sometimes it is not easy to reach agreement between all the administrative bodies but we are managing to do this.

- Within the Territory there is great diversity in many aspects: coastal areas versus the inland farms, significantly different levels of income and infrastructure ... even in the political preferences of the respective mayors. If we look at the Association, the differences between many of its members are huge, but in the end all of these difficulties are overcome and work is carried out together in a mutual manner, therefore achieving good results.

- The awards and acknowledgements received are another clear example of the exemplary nature of the project. All 5 awards from the AEMO and especially the latest from the FDM, or the Hispania Nostra Foundation award from the Santander Bank for "Heritage Conservation, a Factor for Economic and Social Development" and finally the European Union's award for Cultural Heritage / Europa Nostra for the project "A Cultural Landscape of Millenary Olive Trees in the Sénia Territory" (Aragon, Catalonia and Valencia) All of these juries choice of this project certainly demonstrates that it is exemplary.

As to whether all of this will prove itself in the long run, it is difficult to know for sure at this point but so far we have seen with great satisfaction the increase in visits to the area and to

the trees themselves with regards to the project, the many conferences we have attended to explain our activity and even exchanges and contacts with groups in Italy and Crete dealing with similar material.

They have visited the millenary olive trees here and have had work sessions with:

- MIDIT-2020 Derruta-Terra Alta, El Palmeral d'Elx, Forestry and Technology Centre of Catalunya, Mercats de Barcelona, Bonsai Associations of Tarragona and Castellon, Agricultural Engineers Association of Valencia and Castellon to name a few.

- We have spoken with many different government authorities: state, regional, provincial and local or course, who have since visited the area as a consequence. Even some well known celebrities have become interested in the project.

We have been to present and explain the aims of this project in places as diverse as:

- Vienna (Europa Nostra) Madrid (FITUR and MARM), Barcelona (Mercat Boqueria, SOC Conference, La Pedrera, The Taste of the Rambla, University of Barcelona), Valencia (MUVIM, the AVE train station, the Port), Zaragoza (Slow Food), Sevilla (CONAMA), Mallorca (Xarxa), Granada (Hispania Nostra), Caceres (Spanish EU Presidency), Sierra de las Nieves (Málaga), Sant Fruitós (Alicia F.), Castelló (Corte Ingles), Moianès, Pont Armentera, Tremp, Serra d'Almos, Tales, etc.

- With groups from Italy we have done exchange trips both here and there (CIHEAM Bari, Torre GUACETO and the University of Perugia) and we were in Crete (Greece) with the Spanish Olive Municipalities Association.

14. Public participation

Does the project actively encourage the public's participation in the decision-making process? How?

Is the project in line with the wider policies implemented by national, regional or local authorities?

The "Landscape of Millenary Olive Trees in the Senia Territory" project has encouraged active public participation in decision-making processes and this participation throughout has been a fundamental premise.

The Sénia Territory Association, formed by 50% of representatives from economic sectors (agricultural, tourist, social) and 50% by the Taula del Sénia Commonwealth (grouping and representing 27 municipalities in the area), it was created with the intention to work to improve the quality of life of its people. Right from the beginning of the project, the exchange of information and close cooperation in decision-making processes between the Commonwealth and the Association has been fundamental and certainly one of the premises of its success.

In 2008, the Inventory of the millennium olive trees was carried out by the Commonwealth (with help from the SOC- Catalanian Occupation Service and ESF- European Social Fund). With extensive cooperation from all sectors within the territory, a pilot project was jointly developed that introduced the Association to MARM (The Spanish Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Environment), obtaining a grant of €1.2 million (over 4 years). Following the signing of a collaboration agreement between the two entities, the entire execution of the project was directed by a joint Committee (6 members of the A-TS and 6 M-TdS and chaired by the President of the Association) during the 4 years. It was stated that "Given the public and private mix of entities, it will ensure that all agreements will be unanimous or failing this, will be made with a broad consensus." In reality, all resolutions were unanimous.

However, it was in the beginning of the pilot project, which started with only 1 oil producing mill and went on to a total of 8, that there was a serious debate on whether or not to market a

single brand olive oil or that each mill would produce and sell their own. Both options had supporters and detractors. It was decided that a period of reflection and dialogue online where everyone could exposing their views and make comments would be opened. In the end the decision was unanimous that each mill would have its own brand of oil. However, it was also agreed that the best external quality and food control centres and official certification company would oversee all controls of the origin of the ancient olive oil and its high quality. This partnership would be known as the 'Mixed Commission'. In addition, in order to promote a single brand it was deemed necessary to create a company and that the production of this exceptional oil would always be scarce.

On finishing the pilot project, the official joint commission had completed their initial task but have continued in other projects (Rural Development Convention, OLIVAT and OLIVAT2) operating in a similar way by meeting regularly and maintaining permanent contact through the Internet.

And indeed, due to this positive experience this system has been extended to other collaboration networks currently working on other projects in OLIVAT2 (with the help of the SOC, Ministry of Employment and ESF) and in addition to those already set up with mills, owners, restaurants, etc. tourism and local development officials, local research groups and institutions all related to the topic of The Sénia Territory Millenary Olive Trees.

It is evident that this project encapsulates the stipulated policies at the highest level. Suffice to say, at national and regional levels, it has been presented to the Cultural Landscape National Plan for the 3 Autonomous Regions (Valencia, Catalonia and Aragon).

And locally, in addition to the support it receives from all the local authorities, part of its territory has been now included in the Biosphere Reserve (Terres de l'Ebre).

15. Awareness-raising

Is the project effectively increasing the public's awareness of the importance of landscape in terms of human development, consolidation of European identity, or individual and collective well-being? How?

Throughout the Sénia Territory Millenary Olive Tree Landscape, a total of 4,800 ancient and monumental olive trees, almost all of the 'Farga' variety can be found. Most of them are located next to the ancient Roman Via Augusta, but also share their space with other smaller 'Farga' olive trees or other traditional local varieties. Dry stones walls and other such buildings are abundant and a very unique flora and fauna adapted to the environment is present.

It seems that it was the Phoenicians who brought this variety of olive tree to the Iberian Peninsula, but their great expansion took place during the Roman Empire. The 'Farga' variety is the oldest and almost all of the Sénia Territory ancient olive trees are of this kind. Specimens with the same DNA but with different names have also been found in the south of France and Italy.

The olive tree has been present in all historical cultures of the Mediterranean, but has also been linked to most religions and has had a leading role not only in written literature, but also within popular wisdom. It is also a symbol used for both sport and peace. In addition to its extension to America, five centuries ago, most recently it has been disseminated through many other countries and continents: China, Australia and more recently India, although the number one country in the world is Spain.

Olive oil is the product obtained from the fruit of the olive tree, the olive. In addition to its nutritional properties, more studies increasingly show its health values and it is certainly one

of the pillars of the renowned Mediterranean Diet.

As a consequence of all this, the “Landscape of Millenary Olive Trees in the Senia Territory” project, which is based on this kind of olive tree and also on sustainable development of rural areas, set in a territory located at the center of the three ancient kingdoms of the Crown of Aragon (today, 3 Autonomous Communities) and has been carried out with both public and private participation, in our belief helps to create awareness of landscape values from the point of view of human development.

As for the consolidation of the European identity, the traditional olive tree landscape is very characteristic of all of southern Europe, therefore we think this project based on this landscape with the intention of continuing to give it value and discouraging its replacement for economic reasons, helps both other areas in Spain (Balearic Islands, Andalusia, etc.) and other southern European countries. During The European Heritage Days 2014 <http://www.europeanheritagedays.com/>, the Cultural Landscape of Ancient Olive Trees in the Senia Territory participated in 7 different activities from the 14th September to 18th of October, looking to extend knowledge of this project at a European level.

On 5 May in Vienna the project was awarded the European Union Cultural Prize/ Europa Nostra Heritage, where the Jury stated that it was aware that there are many ancient olive tree plantations in other areas of Spain and in several other Mediterranean countries but that this project is an outstanding example of conservation and protection of such an extraordinary natural heritage.

Finally it is clear that this project has not only helped preserve the landscape of olive trees but it has also improved the income of the land owners, other farmers, merchants and restaurants of the area and helps to create employment (as promoted by the European Landscape Convention). Currently ancient olive tree oils are sold in the mills for €15-20 per 500ml bottle (in Barcelona from 30 to 40 € and 90 € in China). And thanks to this oil, others have been introduced in emerging markets.

With all that has been done: museums, areas, olive tree routes (which can be visited by everybody), it can be said without a shadow of a doubt, that it has also helped to contribute to the collective wellbeing.

V. ADDITIONAL MATERIAL

Together with the printed version of the Application form, additional material in digital format should be included in one CD-Rom or DVD and returned by post or courier to:

Maguelonne Déjeant-Pons

Executive Secretary of the European Landscape Convention

Head of Division, Council of Europe

F-67075 STRASBOURG, Cedex

Tel: +33 (0) 3 88 41 23 98

E-mail: maguelonne.dejeant-pons@coe.int

- Text (10 pages max.): *PDF format*
- Photos (10): *JPEG 350 dpi high definition*
- Video (10mn.): *mp4 format - It is advised to present a video (even of amateur).*
- Authorisation to use the material sent
- The support of the 3 Autonomous Regions (Valencia, Catalonia and Aragon)
- Publications