

**Resolution CM/ResDip(2008)1
on the revised regulations for the European Diploma for Protected Areas**

*(Adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 20 February 2008
at the 1018th meeting of the Ministers' Deputies)¹*

Appendix 5: Model plan for annual reports

Annual report for the year

Annual reports should describe the changes that have taken place since the previous year in dynamic terms of management and function and not be limited to basic data. Any new text or map introducing a change in the situation of the area should be attached to the annual report.

State: SPAIN

Name of the area: DOÑANA NATIONAL PARK

Year and number of years since the award or renewal of the European Diploma for Protected Areas: 2011 and 12

Central authority concerned:

Name: JUNTA DE ANDALUCÍA. CONSEJERÍA DE SOSTENIBILIDAD, MEDIO AMBIENTE Y ECONOMÍA AZUL. DIRECCIÓN GENERAL DE ESPACIOS NATURALES PROTEGIDOS.

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Authority responsible for its management:

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¹ As amended by Resolution CM/ResDip(2014)2 on 2 July 2014 at the 1204th meeting of the Ministers' Deputies.

1. Conditions: List here all conditions which were attached to the award or the renewal of the European Diploma. Explain either how the conditions have been totally complied with or detail the progress in complying with the conditions. Please also indicate any unresolved difficulties that you have encountered

1.1. the Spanish authorities should continue to take all necessary measures to ensure that the Port of Sevilla development projects have no significant environmental impact on the Doñana ecosystems. Any decision should be conditioned by the results of a complementary study to the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) report;

There have been no variations in this matter. The project has been rejected by the Spanish authorities. The third planning cycle 2022-2027, approved by Royal Decree 35/2023, of January 24, published in BOE no. 35, of February 10, 2023, effective February 11, 2023, does not include it among its measures.

1.2. the Andalusian Government, responsible for the management of the national park and also for water management, should ensure the high quality of water entering the national park and eliminate the illegal extraction of groundwater; in accordance with the Water Framework Directive, it should monitor the status of the aquifer underlying the national park and surrounding lands, the extent of groundwater extraction and the water quality

In relation to the implementation of the Special Irrigation Management Plan and the measures adopted for the reduction of groundwater extractions, both the Guadalquivir Hydrographic Confederation (CHG) and the Regional Government of Andalusia have continued to maintain detailed monitoring of the activity. The actions for the replacement of catchments with surface water and the implementation of procedures for the closure of wells have also been consolidated.

In July 2020, the groundwater bodies of La Rocina, Almonte and Marismas were declared as bodies at risk of not reaching good quantitative status and the groundwater body of La Rocina as a body of water at risk of not reaching good chemical status. This declaration has drastically limited the possibility of new extractions. Likewise, by means of this declaration, the CHG has the maximum legal and administrative tools to defend the integrity of the aquifer.

As mentioned in the previous report, among the measures to be included in these action programs, Spanish legislation allows for the following:

- a) Establish the replacement of pre-existing individual catchments by community catchments, transforming, where appropriate, the various individual titles with their inherent rights into a collective one that must comply with the provisions of the action program.
- b) provide for the input of external resources to the groundwater body. In this case, the criteria for joint exploitation of the existing resources in the body of water and the external ones will be included.
- c) Include a perimeter within which it will not be possible to grant new groundwater concessions unless the holders of pre-existing concessions are constituted as user communities.
- d) To determine protection perimeters in groundwater bodies in which authorisation shall be required to carry out infrastructure works, extraction of aggregates or other activities and installations that may affect it, without prejudice to any other authorisations that may be necessary in accordance with the sectoral legislation in question. Such delimitation and conditions will be binding in the drawing up of planning instruments, as well as in the granting of licences by the competent public administrations for land and town planning.

During 2023, actions have continued in the two main areas mentioned in the previous report:

- (a) concession of the Irrigation Community of El Fresno (Guadalquivir) and.
- b) other compulsory execution procedures.

In the case of the Community of Irrigators El Fresno, an initial set of 410 wells to be closed was identified. However, as the definition of the work requires that any well located in the irrigation area, whether previously identified or not, must also be closed, this forecast raises the total number of catchments to be closed to 450. The closure work under this file began in January 2021 and is continuing at present, with 42 wells remaining to be closed.

Since 2015, the overall data of this type of procedures amount to 93 wells in the area of the Tinto, Odiel and Piedras and 688, in the area of the Guadalquivir, totaling, in the scope of the Special Plan, 781 catchments. 342 of these catchments have been closed since December 2020.

The CHG has continued for another year with the review and management of existing water uses to the north of the Doñana Forest Crown, by means of a regulation process developed for this purpose, which is currently being carried out.

The annual analysis of satellite images of the area by remote sensing has been maintained, in order to locate greenhouses and detect their presence outside irrigable agricultural land, opening proceedings on all irregularities detected.

It should also be recalled that the final approval of the third cycle of hydrological planning of the Guadalquivir Basin has given firmness to the program of measures accompanying the Hydrological Plan for the period 2022-2027.

The proposed measures aim to avoid the impacts caused by groundwater abstractions used to supply the tourist town of Matalascañas (Huelva). This objective is to be achieved by changing the location of the boreholes used to supply the urbanization and, in the future, by transferring water to Matalascañas from the Tinto DWTP in the Tinto, Odiel Piedras District.

With respect to the first measure, during 2023 test wells have been drilled in the new wells. The results of the pilot tests have determined the need for the construction of two boreholes to guarantee the supply and the definitive project for the opening of the same to the west of Mataslacañas has been drafted. The processing of this project is in its last phase of approval.

The drafting of the transfer project from the Tinto DWTP, which would allow the elimination of all groundwater abstractions that supply Matalascañas by using surface water, continues to be drafted.

A highlight of 2023 has been the signing of the agreement for Doñana between the Junta de Andalucía and the Government of Spain, which is a very important step forward in the protection of this National Park and also in the opportunities for the future of the region.

Within the scope of this agreement will be integrated:

The ACTION FRAMEWORK FOR DOÑANA presented in 2022 by the Ministry for Ecological Transition and Demographic Challenge (MITECO). This Framework of Actions is mainly focused on the management of water resources and eco-hydrological and biodiversity restoration, for which it allocates 356.3 M€.

The "ACTION FRAMEWORK FOR SUSTAINABLE TERRITORIAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE AREA OF INFLUENCE OF THE DOÑANA NATURAL AREA". This Framework completes the previous one and broadens its field of action, focusing primarily on the social and economic dimensions of sustainability, as a necessary and indivisible complement to the environmental pillar, and contributes to the achievement of the aforementioned specific objectives. For this purpose, MITECO has allocated an additional budget of 350 M€.

The "ACTION FRAMEWORK FOR THE TERRITORIAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE AREA OF INFLUENCE OF THE DOÑANA NATURAL AREA". This framework is financed by the Junta de Andalucía with more than 700 M€ for hydraulic works, support for the fishing sector and aid for the transformation of crops to forest land.

In total, a commitment of more than €1,400 million to ensure the conservation of Doñana and promote sustainable development models in its area of influence.

All this, in addition, has meant the decay of the Proposition of Law for the improvement of the management of the agricultural areas of Condado de Huelva, in the municipalities of Almonte, Bonares, Lucena del Puerto, Moguer and Rociana del Condado (Huelva),

2. **Recommendations:** List here all recommendations which were attached to the award or the renewal of the European Diploma. Explain either how the recommendations have been totally complied with or detail the progress in complying with the recommendations. Please also indicate any unresolved difficulties that you have encountered.

1. all efforts should be made to restore the good ecological state of the river at the level of its catchment (river basin or water basin), within the meaning of the Water Framework Directive; all appropriate measures should be taken in order to make water use and other activities, especially agricultural activities, in this catchment (basin) compatible with this aim;

The Hydrographic Confederation of the Guadalquivir completed the processing of the Third Hydrological Planning Cycle of the Guadalquivir River Basin. This planning was approved by Royal Decree 35/2023, of January 24, published in BOE No. 35, of February 10, 2023, with entry into force on February 11.

As mentioned in the previous report, this new cycle incorporates several sections specific to Doñana, despite the small surface of this area in a basin which exceeds 5.7 million hectares in Andalusia.

The documentation referring to this planning is available both on the web page of the Ministry for Ecological Transition and the Demographic Challenge and of the Guadalquivir Hydrographic Confederation: https://www.miteco.gob.es/es/agua/temas/planificacion-hidrologica/planificacion-hidrologica/pphh_tercer_ciclo.html
<https://www.chguadalquivir.es/tercer-ciclo-guadalquivir>

During 2023, inspection campaigns have been maintained during the months of June and July in order to check the installation of meters and verify the readings in certain intakes located in the Doñana forest crown, orienting the sampling according to the volume registered and the municipal district.

As mentioned above, the CHG carries out two inspection plans of crops under plastic every year, using spatial remote sensing techniques. Images corresponding to autumn, when the plastic is being placed on the greenhouses, and in spring, when the campaign is ending, are analyzed. This information, once processed, is crossed with other cartographic data on irrigation rights, Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) declarations, location of ponds, etc.

The CHG and the Pablo de Olavide University (UPO) of Seville signed a collaboration agreement in 2020 with the aim of continuing to the research that has been carried out since 2015 on the hydrological processes that occur in Doñana. These works have led, among other results, to the development of a specific doctoral thesis on the subject, entitled: Surface water-groundwater interactions in sand dune ponds located in Doñana National Park, which was presented in 2019, giving rise to various publications. In this new stage it is expected to be able to analyse the functioning and hydrological status of the peridune lagoons in the National Park and, if necessary, to propose the addition of new piezometers to the existing network to complete the necessary data in the study area.

Another package of measures included in the Hydrological Plan includes sanitation and purification actions in the area, as well as other measures related to increasing the available water resources:

- Service for the drafting of the preliminary project for the expansion and improvement of the Matalascañas WWTP, purification of the Doñana area. TM. Almonte (Huelva).
- Enlargement of the Matalascañas WWTP, Almonte, Huelva.
- Upstream infrastructures for the transfer of resources from the Tinto, Odiel and Piedras D.H. to the Guadalquivir DH (Corona de Doñana) in accordance with the Law of Transfer of 20 hm³/year.
- Study of the location of sources of chemical contamination in the Guadiamar river basin.
- Review of the pending actions of the DOÑANA 2005 project and derived actions.
- A new study of alternatives that specifies and defines the actions to be completed in relation to the Guadiamar channel and its connection with the entire river basin. Specifically, it is a question of outlining what was called "Action No. 5: Recovery of the functionality of the Guadiamar channel".

The Program of measures exclusively for Doñana amounts to 255 million euros of investment to be executed during the development of this third planning cycle.

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2. a specific emergency plan for the Doñana National Park should be prepared and a map of natural risks should be drawn up;

The Natural Area has a Self-Protection Plan against hydrocarbon spills and is a priority area in the Andalusian forest fire plan: INFOCA Plan. There have been no changes with respect to the last report issued.

3. the implementation of the action plans for the conservation of the flagship species, in particular the Iberian lynx and the Imperial eagle, should be actively pursued; new action plans for other threatened species should be drawn up if needed;

As reported in previous reports, different conservation plans continue to be developed for the most emblematic species of Doñana:

- Iberian lynx recovery plan.
- Recovery plan for the Iberian imperial eagle.
- Recovery and conservation plan for necrophagous birds.
- Plan for the recovery and conservation of steppe birds,
- Plan for the recovery and conservation of wetland birds,
- Plan for the recovery and conservation of aquatic invertebrates and fish.
- The Dunes and Coastal Cliffs Plan.

The Doñana population, in addition to having served as the founding nucleus for the Iberian Lynx Ex-situ Captive Breeding Program, has managed to double its population since it began and stabilize it at around 90 specimens. The latest census data available for 2022 indicate that the total population of this species in Doñana is 107 individuals, with 27 territorial females and 27 cubs. With these data, the record population in this area of distribution has been achieved.

Regarding the imperial eagle, 8 breeding pairs have been recorded in 2022, although due to the drought, the breeding success continues to be quite low. Only four pairs managed to lay and only three chicks managed to fly.

4. concerning the Port of Sevilla development projects, the Spanish authorities should avail itself of the best international scientific expertise and also take account of the relevant international conventions, such as the Ramsar Convention, the World Heritage Convention and the Bern Convention, and work closely with the relevant international bodies, including the European Union and the European Environment Agency;

On this issue, the commitment made previously to eliminate dredging from the planning is maintained, so there is no new developments in this regard and there are no initiatives related to this action.

5. the updating of the management plan should be started in 2011;

The current planning of the Doñana Natural Area has been in force since September 2016 (Decree 142/2016, of August 2, published in the Official Gazette of the Andalusian Regional Government of September 26, 2016).

6. the extension of the Doñana 2005 Project to riparian vegetation, correcting erosion problems or extending its scope to adjacent areas of agricultural marsh, should be undertaken;

The Project, mentioned in the 2022 report, called "REVIEW AND UPDATE OF THE STUDY OF ALTERNATIVES FOR THE DEFINITION OF ACTION NUMBER 5: RECOVERY OF THE FUNCTIONALITY OF THE GUADIAMAR CANAL" is still being developed. So far, the analysis of the different alternatives and the hydrological studies have been carried out to confirm the feasibility of the actions. Soon the documents will be available to facilitate the public information of the project. This action is endowed with a budget of more than 339,000 €.

7. the possibility of developing co-operation with other European Diploma sites which are deltas, such as the Camargue National Reserve (France) or the Danube Delta Biosphere Reserve (Romania), should be explored.

No han existido avances en este sentido durante 2023

No progress has been made in this regard during 2023.

3. **Site Management:** List here any changes to the European Diploma holding site management, in relation to both terrestrial and aquatic environments (as appropriate), and in relation to staff and finances, since the last annual report was submitted to the Council of Europe. Please also indicate any unresolved difficulties that you have encountered.

In terms of personnel, the figures in 2023 increased to 134 employees and 106 professionals linked to different projects that support the management of the protected area. The investment in the National Park during 2021 after the accounting closure amounted to more than €15 million and is expected to reach similar figures in 2022.

4. **Boundaries:** Give details of any changes to the boundaries of the European Diploma holding site since the last annual report was submitted to the Council of Europe. If there are any changes, please attach an appropriate map to this report. Please also indicate any unresolved difficulties that you have encountered.

There have been no changes to the national park's boundaries.

1. **Other information:** List here any other information about the European Diploma holding site which you consider should be provided to the Council of Europe.

In response to the Decision adopted at the 38th meeting of the Standing Committee of the Bern Convention, the certifications and designations that overlap with the European Diploma of Doñana are the following:

- World Heritage.
- Ramsar Site
- Biosphere Reserve.
- Site of Community Importance.
- Special Area of Conservation.
- Special Protection Area for Birds.

The following sections of the form should only be filled in if your area is in the year before a renewal of its European Diploma for Protected Areas, i.e. year 4 after the award of the European Diploma or year 9 after its renewal.

6. Natural heritage (general abiotic description: geomorphology, geology and hydrogeology, habitats, flora, fauna, landscape) – State of conservation

- 6.1. Environment: changes or deterioration in the environment, of natural or anthropic origin, accidental or permanent, actual or anticipated
- 6.2. Flora and vegetation: changes in the plant population and in the vegetational cover; presumed causes
- 6.3. Fauna: changes in the sedentary or migratory populations; congregating, egg-laying and breeding grounds

7. Cultural heritage and socio-economic context

- 7.1. Cultural heritage
 - 7.1.1. Changes concerning cultural heritage
- 7.2. Socio-economic context
 - 7.2.1. Changes concerning the socio-economic context

8. Education and scientific interest

- 8.1. Visitors – Information policy
 - 8.1.1. Arrangements for receiving and informing the public (building, booklets, maps, cards, etc.)
 - 8.1.2. Frequentation by visitors and behavior (number, distribution in time and space)
 - 8.1.3. Special visits (distinguished persons, groups, etc.)
- 8.2. Scientific research
 - 8.2.1. Current or completed research (observation, experimentation, etc.; identification or inventory of the species listed in the appendices to the Bern Convention, etc.)
 - 8.2.2. Scientific publications

9. Site description (vulnerability, protection status, ownership, documentation)

- 9.1. Changes in legislation or regulations
- 9.2. Changes in ownership title (conversion to public property, rentals, etc.)
- 9.3. Extension or transfer, new uses (for example, conversion into total reserve)

10. Site management (management plans, budget and personnel)

- 10.1. Improvements made
 - 10.1.1. Ecological action affecting the flora and biotopes; controls of fauna
 - 10.1.2. Protection against the elements (fire, water regime)
 - 10.1.3. Approaches and thoroughfares (paths, roads, car parks, signposting, fencing, etc.)
 - 10.1.4. Field equipment (hides and study facilities)
 - 10.1.5. Waste management
 - 10.1.6. Use of renewable energy systems
- 10.2. Management
 - 10.2.1. Administrative department: changes made
 - 10.2.2. Wardens' department: changes made
 - 10.2.3. Internal policing measures
 - 10.2.4. Infringement of regulations and damage; legal action

11. Influence of the award of the European Diploma for Protected Areas

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