

**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)<sup>1</sup>*

**Appendix 5: Model plan for annual reports**

**Annual report for the year 2023**

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: Portugal

Name of the area: Desertas Islands Nature Reserve

Year and number of years since the award or renewal of the European Diploma for Protected Areas:  
awarded since 2014; 4 years since the renewal in 2019.

**Central authority concerned:**

Name: Governo Regional da Madeira / Secretaria Regional de Agricultura e Ambiente

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**Authority responsible for its management:**

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<sup>1</sup> As amended by Resolution CM/ResDip(2014)2 on 2 July 2014 at the 1204th meeting of the Ministers' Deputies.  
Internet : <http://www.coe.int/cm>

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. **eliminate avoidable causes of non-natural mortality of Mediterranean monk seals. To this end, revise the design and construction of the local fishing gear, the so-called “covos”, to include mechanisms which prevent the capture of young seals and their subsequent death by drowning. Alternatively, replace the fishing equipment that causes these accidents with safer and more sustainable systems which do not interfere with the population of marine mammals in general, and of the monk seal in particular;** the responsible regional authority updated the Desertas Islands Nature Reserve legislation and regulations in order to forbid the use of the local fishing gear, the so-called “covos” in the Reserve’s area. It was officially published by Regional Legislative Decree No. 27/2021/M that approves the new legal regime for the Desertas Islands Nature Reserve.

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. **maintain all necessary precautions to ensure that no plant and/or animal species is introduced into the reserve;** stringent quarantine measures are rigorously implemented to ensure that no species of plants and animals are introduced to the reserve. Visiting boats are forbidden to pass any ropes to land and all the food and equipment of the site management staff, or other visitors, are transported in sealed containers. Additionally, during the summer, when the number of visits to the island increases, a cordon of tubes with rodenticide is placed around the only official anchoring place of the island and these are inspected regularly.

2. **analyse and publish studies carried out on the flora and fauna, following the definitive eradication of all alien species, including recent available data for the three islands;** during 2023, local and foreign scientists develop various research projects in Desertas Islands. Qualitative and quantitative data is being obtained every year and reports are being produced accordingly.

3. **monitor soil erosion on the plateau surface of Bugio and, if deemed necessary, implement restoration measures;** monitoring of the main actions of the project LIFE SOS Freira do Bugio – Urgent actions for the recovery of *Pterodroma deserta* and its habitat LIFE06 NAT/PT/000184, which was developed between 2006 and 2010, has been maintained up to present, involving habitat restoration. There is a constant effort to combat soil erosion, considered one of the priority duties of the nature wardens of the Reserve.

4. **keep the goat population at a very low level and under a strict monitoring scheme to ensure the regeneration of natural vegetation and the success of propagation programmes for threatened or extinct plant species. While 25 years of field experience has led to positive results, continue to explore and test alternative methods for a selective and progressive reduction of the goat population while avoiding animal suffering;** the main actions of the project LIFE RECOVER NATURA - Recovery of the species and land habitats of the Natura 2000 sites Ponta de São Lourenço and Desertas Islands LIFE12 NAT/PT/000195 (2013-2019) (details given in <https://liferecovernatura.madeira.gov.pt/>), involved an evaluation of population densities and distribution of goats; a significant reduction in the goat population and establishing a monitoring scheme that allows the evaluation of the success of the management measures implemented to control the goat population; which has been maintained up to present.

5. **ensure a high level of training for the guides who accompany tourists in the reserve;** visitors are met by the Nature Wardens, accompany them along the informative circuit and then to the reception centre. In the case of maritime-tourist visitors, this guided tour is made by the staff of each company; whose employees have received specific training provided by the site management staff. The site management has also signed a protocol with the Regional Delegation of the National Trade Union of Tourist Activity, Translators and Interpreters, under which these professionals receive specific information that results in a better quality of information provided at the location.

6. **pursue the monitoring of the yellow-legged gull breeding population and their possible interferences with seabird colonies, in order to ensure early detection of possible negative changes;** although the yellow-legged gull (Atlantic form) *Larus michahellis atlantis* should not be considered an alien species, there is a constant effort to prevent their breeding on the islands (Ilhéu Chão, Deserta Grande and

Bugio). Due to the remoteness of Desertas Islands and to their characteristics this is an easy and forward task.

**7. monitor the implementation of the management plan against conservation objectives and initiate its revision by 2024.** the responsible regional authority is committed to update the management plan of the Desertas Islands Nature Reserve by 2024

**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.

As already reported, it was officially published the Regional Legislative Decree No. 27/2021/M that approves the new legal regime for the Desertas Islands Nature Reserve. The following changes are highlighted:

- a) now it is forbidden the use of the local fishing gear, the so-called "covos" in the Reserve's area,
- b) designation of a critical Mediterranean monk seal reproduction area, where it is forbidden to fish

**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.

No changes occurred.

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

All the events and lectures addressed to the public in general and target groups, as well as the website, facebook campaigns and new production of illustrated material, namely informative panels, used to raise awareness about the importance of the Desertas Islands Nature Reserve, were reinforced with the European Diploma logo.

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**