

## **Resolution CM/ResDip(2025)2 on the award of the European Diploma for Protected Areas to the Sierra Nevada National Park, Nature Park and Biosphere Reserve (Spain)**

*(Adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 9 July 2025  
at the 1534<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Ministers' Deputies)*

Appendix 5: Model plan for annual reports

### **Annual report for the year 2025**

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:

Name of the area: Sierra Nevada National Park, Nature Park and Biosphere Reserve

Year and number of years since the award or renewal of the European Diploma for Protected Areas: 0 Years

Central authority concerned:

Name: Consejería de Sostenibilidad y Medio Ambiente. Junta de Andalucía

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Authority responsible for its management:

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#### **1. Conditions:**

None.

#### **2. Recommendations:**

##### **2.1. Prepare and adopt a revised version of the Management Plan as soon as possible**

Regarding the modification of the basic regulations governing this Protected Area, which are established under Decree 238/2011 of 12 July regulating the planning and management of Sierra Nevada (Natural Resource Management Plan – PORN – and Master Plans for Use and Management – PRUG), it is considered necessary to adapt these regulations to the various standards adopted subsequently, as well as to update them to the current reality of uses within this Area.

In order to expand information on this last aspect, a participatory process has been carried out within the Participation Council with the involvement of various associations, professional bodies, and other groups not previously represented within it.

The result of this work, undertaken by the external consultancy GESTEMASUR, is the document entitled: **DIAGNOSTIC REPORT ON THE NEEDS FOR AMENDING DECREE 238/2011 – PORN AND PRUGS OF THE SIERRA NEVADA NATURAL AREA.**

The report compiles, in addition to the aforementioned need for amendment, numerous proposals for updating the legal text, using as reference the regulations of other national and natural parks.

This document represents substantial progress in the revision of the regulations governing this Area and promotes the processing of the amendment of Decree 238/2011 of 12 July regulating the planning and management of Sierra Nevada.

Once finalised, the document has been presented and discussed within the Participation Council.

After submitting the proposal to amend the aforementioned regulations to the Directorate-General for Protected Natural Areas, the Council has been notified that on 09/01/26 the General Committee of Vice-Ministers will adopt the Agreement to Formulate the Revision of Decree 238/2011, which will subsequently be published in the Official Gazette of the Regional Government of Andalusia, a document of which due notice will be provided.

In any case, before completing the amendment, the text of the new Master Plan for the National Parks Network—which is currently under development and expected to be approved during 2026—must be taken into account, as it will be decisive for the formulation of the Sierra Nevada regulations.

## **2.2. Continue to support long-term research on the impact of climate change, particularly the activities of the Laboratory of Global Process in Spain**

In 2024, the agreement with the University of Granada to support the Sierra Nevada Global Change Observatory, part of the Andalusian Observatory Network, came to an end.

Given the legal impossibility of renewing the agreement, the process of drafting a new one began. This involved working with the Environment and Water Agency and the University to redefine the work that had been carried out since 2008, taking into account that some monitoring activities had to be adjusted to the new funding framework and the changing circumstances of the natural area's management.

Regardless of this, field monitoring by all those involved, the issuance of reports, and general collaboration are being maintained during this transitional period, especially so as not to lose the valuable sequence of data that supports management.

Meetings are also being held between the General Secretariat for the Environment and Climate Change and the University, as well as between the Government Delegation in Granada and the Rector of the University, given the importance of the Observatory's work in the management of the Park.

All of this is aimed at ensuring that the agreement is best suited to the objectives of both entities and others that may participate, such as the University of Almería and the management of the Sierra de las Nieves National Park (Málaga), among others, which can contribute knowledge applicable to the management of Sierra Nevada. The new agreement is expected to be signed in the first half of 2026.

## **2.3. Continue to monitor the impact of tourism in the most popular places...**

During the reporting period (1 September 2024 – 31 August 2025), the Sierra Nevada National Park has continued to strengthen the public-use monitoring system through a network of automatic visitor counters and specific campaigns assessing impacts in areas experiencing higher recreational pressure. Key actions on signage have also been integrated, as signage plays a fundamental role in organising public use and preventing ecological impacts.

### **1. Quantitative visitor monitoring through automatic counters**

- The network of electronic counters installed at access points and highly frequented trails (Hoya de la Mora–Veleta, Mulhacén and other high-mountain locations) has operated

continuously; as of 31 August, the number of counting devices stands at 30.

- The data allow analysis of the intensity and temporal variability of public use, identification of peak influxes, and support decision-making on regulation.
- Annual integration of the data facilitates multi-year trend analysis, essential for detecting changes in visitor patterns that may affect the Park's natural values.

## **2. Qualitative monitoring and assessment of impacts on vegetation and fauna**

- Periodic campaigns have been conducted to evaluate impacts on fragile high-mountain vegetation, particularly in areas above 2,500 m where the risk of erosion and loss of plant cover is greatest.
- Additional inspections have been carried out in areas where counters recorded significant increases, assessing potential effects on vulnerable fauna during sensitive periods.
- Unauthorised trail traces and critical points of compaction or erosion have been reviewed, and preventive actions undertaken to avoid further spread.

## **3. Measures adopted based on public-use monitoring**

- In areas under greatest recreational pressure, actions to channel visitor flow have been reinforced through trail maintenance, control of off-trail movement, and improved signage.
- During peak visitor months, environmental officers and public-use personnel have increased their presence to regulate visitor flow and raise awareness.
- Data from the counters have been used to adjust motorised access regulations in high-mountain areas during critical periods, reducing pressure on sensitive areas.

## **4. New Signage Project and its contribution to reducing tourism impacts**

During this period, significant progress has been made in planning a new Signage Project for protected natural areas with a notable positive effect on public-use management and impact reduction.

The project aims to:

- conceive signage as a tool for public-use management, improving visitor channelling and reducing dispersion in sensitive areas;
- contribute to conservation and sustainability of activities within the Park;
- balance management needs, visitor interests, and landscape integration while minimising visual impact.

A needs-assessment phase has begun within a new project financed by FEADER under the Andalusian CAP Strategic Plan 2021–2027. Key lines of action include:

- Installation of new signs where required for public-use management.
- Optimisation of the number and placement of signs to avoid excessive concentration, improve landscape readability, and reduce visual impact, especially in high-mountain areas.

The project contributes directly to the recommendation by:

- appropriately guiding visitors and reducing dispersion in fragile zones;
- minimising the emergence of informal trails;
- improving maintenance efficiency and adaptive management of itineraries;

- strengthening visitor information on rules, restrictions and conservation values.

## 2.4. Study the potential for greater use of solar energy...

During the reporting period, significant progress has been made in implementing photovoltaic solar energy installations in centres linked both to biodiversity conservation and public use within the Sierra Nevada National and Natural Park.

These actions form part of a strategy to reduce energy dependence in public infrastructures and improve efficiency, in line with the recommendation issued during the European Diploma renewal.

The interventions are funded through the EU Recovery and Resilience Facility – Next Generation EU, with a regional total of €3,200,000, divided into 8 provincial lots. This has enabled the implementation of a comprehensive programme including: photovoltaic self-consumption systems, charging points for electric vehicles, and improvements in the energy rating of existing infrastructures.

The projects cover centres for the recovery of endangered species, public-use facilities (visitor centres, information points, ecomuseums), forest nurseries, botanical gardens, shelters, mountain lodges, recreational areas and supervised camping areas.

Below are the centres and estimated investment affecting this Protected Area:

CENTRE	PROVINC E	VEHICLE CHARGER	ESTIMATED COST
AN Paredes	Almería	Yes	€37,200.00
CR Monterrey	Almería	No	€17,500.00
CV Laujar	Almería	Yes	€29,100.00
AR El Serbal	Almería	No	€32,500.00
AN El Aguadero	Granada	Yes	€22,000.00
CV El Dornajo	Granada	Yes	€45,600.00
HM Nevada	Granada	Yes	€19,000.00
AR Los Llanos Kiosk	Granada	No	€11,625.00
AR La Zubia Kiosk	Granada	No	€25,000.00
CF La Cortijuela	Granada	No	€27,000.00
PI Canal Espartera	Granada	No	€7,500.00
JB Hoya Pedraza	Granada	Yes	€15,600.00
<b>Total:</b>			<b>€289,625.00</b>

The projects have been designed to respect Sierra Nevada's traditional architecture and landscape values, avoiding undue visual impact through integration into existing structures and discreet location selection.

Work began in July 2025 and by the end of 2025 progress reached 25% in Almería province and 80% in Granada. Technical design and legalisation processes are advancing on schedule.

These actions will substantially improve building energy ratings, reduce CO<sub>2</sub> emissions and increase energy self-sufficiency in public facilities. As buildings account for 36% of total energy consumption in Spain, the intervention has both environmental and economic benefits.

### Difficulties encountered:

No significant issues have been identified to date, although adaptation to architectural and landscape constraints requires detailed planning and continuous supervision to ensure compliance with the European Diploma criteria.

## 2.5. Pay special attention to water quality...

During the reporting period, significant progress has been made in protecting water resources, restoring the historic irrigation channel system (acequias), and monitoring compliance with conditions imposed on the Sierra Nevada Ski and Mountain Resort (Cetursa, S.A.) regarding use of water from the Monachil River.

### **1. Recovery and maintenance of the traditional acequia system**

Work has continued on water-quality conservation, protection of mountain streams, and maintenance of the historic acequia system linked to hydrological regulation and cultural heritage. Actions include: cleaning and restoring sections of acequias, repairing traditional stone walls, restoring historic diversions, improving derivations, always respecting traditional construction typologies.

These interventions support hydrological regulation through *careo*, improve aquifer recharge, and ensure water availability for compatible agricultural and livestock uses while supporting associated biodiversity.

#### **Projects for 2025–2026**

Two major strategic projects have been prepared:

1. **“Maintenance of riparian vegetation linked to mountain acequias in Sierra Nevada for sustainable forest management” – €1,450,943**
2. **“Conservation of aquifer recharge functions and improvement of mountain pastures associated with acequias for sustainable forest management” – €1,000,000**

These projects prioritise: removal of artificial elements (concrete, pipes, plastics), recovery of traditional structures, consolidation of unstable sections using traditional stonework, ecological restoration of riparian vegetation, selective vegetation management, reconstruction of deteriorated sections, recovery of disused acequias.

#### **Outreach actions**

To ensure social engagement and preservation of traditional knowledge:

- information days will be held in local municipalities,
- outreach material will be developed,
- the “Acequero’s Manual” will be updated and reissued.

### **2. Water quality in the Monachil catchment**

Monitoring continues with special attention to:

- abstractions by the ski resort,
- winter flow levels,
- wastewater from Pradollano.

Indicators show overall stability, with no significant deterioration linked to resort activities.

A project is being processed for the **remodelling and upgrading of existing wastewater treatment facilities**, including a new biological treatment line to increase capacity. Public consultation concluded last October.

### **3. Monitoring compliance by Cetursa, S.A.**

Environmental authorisation establishes strict conditions for: abstraction for artificial snow production, wastewater treatment in Pradollano, flow management, hydro-ecological monitoring.

In the last period:

- Cetursa submitted required periodic reports, including species inventories,
- authorised maximum abstractions were respected,
- no unauthorised discharges were detected,
- additional controls were carried out,
- surveillance was reinforced during peak tourist periods.

Climate-related reductions in water availability continue to require close monitoring.

#### **4. Integration of both lines of work**

Acequia restoration and ski-resort water monitoring together reinforce:

- hydrological resilience,
- conservation of riparian and high-mountain ecosystems,
- compatibility between traditional and tourism uses.

#### **Difficulties identified:**

- irregular precipitation and reduced snowpack affect water availability,
- some restoration works require complex agreements among private landowners and local entities,
- peak tourist pressure demands reinforced oversight of the Pradollano sanitation system.

#### **2.6. Use the European Diploma logo.**

All official documents display the European Diploma logo. (You can see an example in anexed doc)

#### **3. Site Management:**

None

#### **4. Boundaries:**

None

#### **5. Other information:**

None