



Action Plan for the Albufera Natural Park

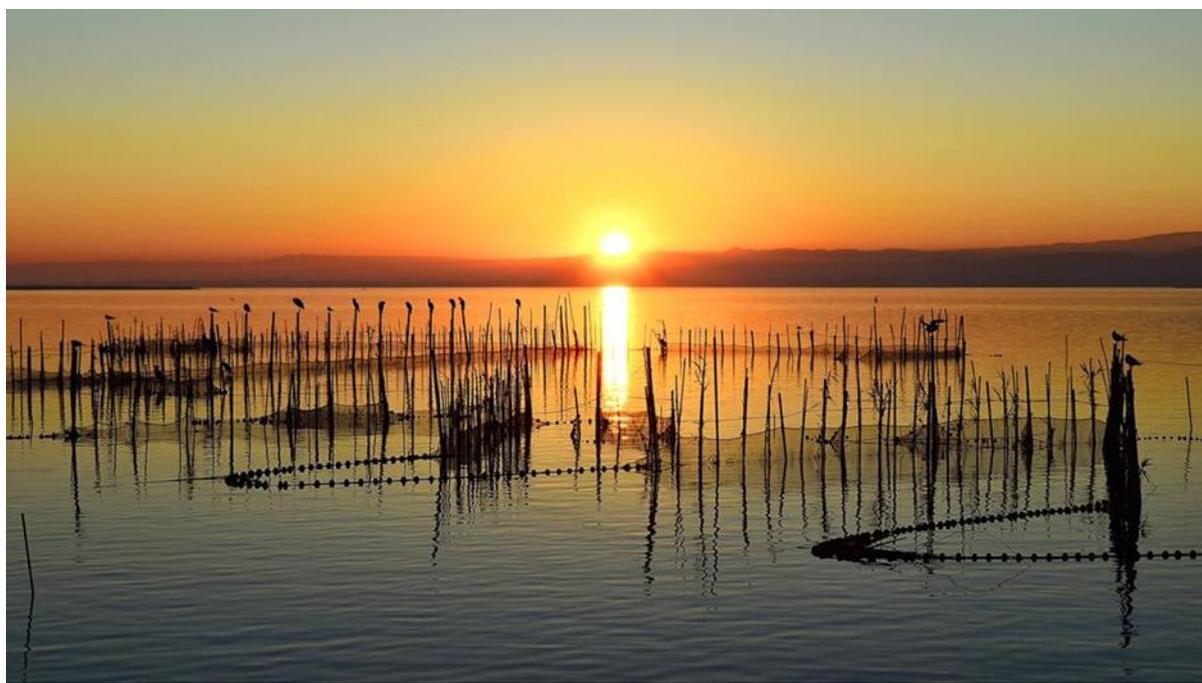




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Introduction

Delta Lady is a project co-founded by the European Union programme Interreg Europe. The project, with a total duration of 60 months, started in June 2018 and intends to finalize on May 2023. The general objective of this project is to develop policies on ecosystem services for sustainable nature, culture, and economy in river deltas in Europe.

Delta Lady is structured in two phases. From June 2018 to May 2021, during the 1st Phase of the Delta Lady project, eight partners from six regions from across the European Union are cooperating in order to improve natural and cultural heritage policies in their territories. During these first 3 years of cooperation and interregional exchanges, the project partners investigated and exchanged best practices and approaches that enable them to foster capabilities in using Deltas ecosystem services for regional economic development. The goal has been to develop innovative activities using local and natural resources.

The nine partners of the project are the following representatives of six different European Delta regions:

- Rijn Delta, University of Twente, and Province of Fryslân, The Netherlands (Lead Partner)
- L'Albufera Natural Park (ANP), Council of Chambers of Commerce, Industry, Services and Shipping, Valencia Region (CCCV_VR), Spain
- Regional Natural Park of Camargue Delta, Provence-Côte d'Azur, France.
- River Blackwater Delta, Cork County Council and University College Cork, Cork, Ireland
- Po Delta Park, Emilia-Romagna Regional Development Agency and Po Delta Park, Emilia Romana, Italy
- Danube Delta, Danube Delta National Institute for Research and Development, Romania

As a result of the work and collaboration of the 1st phase, this document presents the Action Plan that the CCCV_VR will take to implement the lessons and experiences gained from their participation in the Delta Lady project. The CCCV_VR proposes two complementary actions in order to improve the implementation of the Valencia regional policy instrument "ERDF Valencia Region Operational Programme 2014-2020" to any possible extent and to include the identified actions in the preparation of the next "ERDF Valencia Region Operational Programme 2021-2027".

From June 2021 to May 2023, during the 2nd Phase of the Delta Lady Project implementation, the CCCV_VR will work closely with different regional stakeholders on the applicability of the actions.



In the next chapters we first present the policy context related to the ANP and the most valuable insights we learned during the project, followed by an overview of concrete practices that inspired our action plan and the proposed actions.

Part I – General information

Project:	Delta Lady
Partner organisation concerned: and Shipping, (CCCV_VR)	Valencia Region Council of Chambers of Commerce, Industry, Services
Country:	Spain
NUTS2 region:	Valencia Region
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Part II – Policy context

1. Policy Instrument.

At the time of writing the Delta Lady proposal back in 2018, the main idea was to address the improvement of the implementation of the Valencia regional policy instrument “**ERDF Valencia Region Operational Programme 2014-2020**”, (ERDF VR OP 2014-2020), **thematic objective 6: Preserving and protecting environment, promoting resource efficiency, priority Investment 6c: Conservation, protection, and development of natural and cultural heritage, and specific, Objective 6.3.2: Protection, development and promotion of natural areas of touristic interest.**

Knowing that Delta Lady would live the transition from 2014-2020 period to 2021-2021 period, we were counting on the general rule that applies of N+3, meaning that after the end of a period, Member States and partners from all across Europe have 3 additional years of margin to implement the ongoing actions with the remaining budget. However, the COVID-19 pandemic has changed this situation and the CCCV_VR's initial plan. The Commission proposed two coronavirus response packages (IIRC and IIRC +) that modified the Regulation on common provisions and the ERDF Regulation, allowing the reallocation of unspent Structural Funds within the 2014-2020 Multiannual Financial Framework to deal with the social, health and economic crisis derived from COVID-19. In Spain, the Ministry of Finance sent the Autonomous Communities a note that obliges them to reallocate all the resources for health spending, while the structural needs that must be covered with ERDF funds persist.

The CCCV_VR has put all the effort in trying to adapt to this new scenario by slightly changing the perspective: instead of improving the implementation of the ERDF VR OP 2014-2020, we will address the new policy instrument “ERDF Valencia Region Operational Programme 2021-2027 (ERDF VR OP 2021-2027)”. The general objective is to build a proposal including future action lines in the L'Albufera Natural Park consistent with the preparatory activities of the ERDF VR OP 2021-2027.

In addition to the policy instrument we are addressing, the Action Plan will be in line with other Regional Strategies and with the new European priorities based on the ecological transition. From one side, the *Territorial Strategy of the Valencia Region for 2030* (ETCV 2030), particularly as regards to the Guideline 53_Landscapes of Regional Relevance (PRR) _ PRR 32, L'Albufera Natural Park and rice fields of Valencia. From the other side, the Action Plan will also be linked to the *Research and Innovation Smart Specialisation Strategy* of the Valencia Region RIS3_CV, Axis 1: Quality of Life, which includes support for the agri-food sector and sustainable tourism.

The focus on the ecosystem services in the policy instrument of reference (ERDF VR OP 2014-2020) is reflected in the efficient promotion in the use of natural resources, in the preservation of green infrastructures as the most valued assets of the region, the valorisation of landscape, in the recovery of the natural landscape heritage linked



to historic, livestock and greenways and in the development of healthy leisure and touristic activities for economic development of the region.

However, the subsequent policy instrument that is being drafted (ERDF VR OP 2021-2027) should be improved to protect high valuable natural resources of the Valencia Region; in particular, improving the environmental regulation and ecosystem services around L'Albufera Natural Park (21.120 ha) by tackling problems that delta area currently suffers, such as: water pollution, water regime disturbances, urbanization in the dune system, swamp sedimentation, industrial pressure around the park, negative effects caused by surrounding infrastructures mainly roads and the port of Valencia, increasing tourism and recreational pressure.

The Managing Authority of ERDF VR OP, who is also in charge of the preparation of this policy instrument continuation, is the General Directorate of Finance and European Funds from the Regional Ministry of Finance and Economic Model of the Valencia Region Government (DG European Funds), which implements the programme on the three provinces of the Valencia Region. DG European Funds is an active member of the Valencia Regional Stakeholders Group (RSG), which is playing an important role in the interregional learning process.

Moreover, it is worth to highlight that the CCCV_VR participates as Stakeholder in the consultative process of the ERDF VR OP, and it has a collaborative framework for the management of some programmes addressed to SMEs for the improvement of their competitiveness and growth co-funded by ERDF and ESF+.

The mentioned active collaboration between DG European funds and the CCCV_VR is a good starting point to jointly work on the consultative process of the construction of the new ERDF VR OP 2021-2027 in order to include the actions proposed here in the new policy instrument.



2. Need for policy improvement.

Valencia region has very high valuable natural resources with around 45% of its territory declared as “protected area” according to the environmental regulation at regional, national and EU levels. Its “green infrastructure” (all areas and elements with natural, cultural, and visual value), constitutes a big asset for the attractiveness and efficiency of the territory, which makes it **necessary to preserve and improve** it to **guarantee economic growth and quality of life**.

The main reason for what **the policy instrument needs to be improved** is because currently it does not even mention the L’Albufera Natural Park at all, being one of the most representative and valuable coastal wetlands in the Western Mediterranean. This protected area, declared a natural park in 1986, covers 21,120 hectares of 13 different municipalities.

In this area a great variety of natural environments and agricultural landscapes is represented, including dune systems, salt marshes, the lagoon of L’Albufera Natural Park and an extensive agricultural area dedicated to rice (almost 14,000 hectares). L’Albufera Natural Park is characterized by presenting one of the most outstanding waterfowl communities of the Iberian Peninsula as well as endemic species of fauna and flora unique to the Valencian territory, with several aquatic invertebrates, fish such as samaruc and different plants.

On the other hand, this space hosts a rich cultural, scenic and human heritage, and represents an essential territorial area for the socio-economic development of the regions of L’Horta and La Ribera. The current state of L’Albufera Natural Park is the result of a long process of transformation of the environment carried out by the population.

The improvement of the policy instrument is envisaged by:

- **Implementing new actions** addressed at improving the services around the L’Albufera Natural Park in Valencia for economic development (with 120 hectare, L’Albufera Natural Park is considered a Wetland of International Importance by the Ramsar Convention since 1990; declared SPA (Special Protection Area) under the European Union Directive on the Conservation of Wild Birds; and includes a number of habitats included in the 92/5510/EC Directive on the preservation of natural habitats, wild flora and fauna).
As a first action, the CCCV proposes in this Action Plan the implementation of a pilot project to promote the energy transition in L’Albufera Natural Park through the electrification of tourism boats.
- **Developing new business models on the ecosystem services** of the L’Albufera Natural Park capable to valorise its natural heritage, while are respectful to the environment and use eco concepts.
As a first action, the CCCV proposes in this Action Plan the introduction of a PES Scheme in the boating touristic activities as a new business model on the ecosystem services.



- **Improving the governance** and processes between the administration and the ecosystem for a better management of the natural park.
The Action Plan approach will support a better governance model in the L'Albufera Natural Park facilitating the common groundwork of the entities involved. The organization and celebration of the different Stakeholders meeting has been a key element in the success of this objective.
- **Identifying deficiencies and needs** around the daily functioning system in the wetlands and exchange best practices with other project partner countries to improve the policy instrument in the Valencia region. The CCCV, before the definition of the Action Plan, has conducted a Case Study, it is an in-depth knowledge of the regional situation to identify the main challenges. A wide analysis was done, and policy improvements has been proposed in due sense, presenting results to the stakeholders, responsible policy makers, politicians, and regional media, aiming at implementing the most outstanding findings and recommendations than can be transferable to the other delta regions.
- **Defining of new programs** about the development and use of the wetlands ecosystem services to improve their understanding as social ecological system.
- **Supporting new projects and business models** with a high degree of innovation that can improve current and future services around the wetland's ecosystem.

As mentioned previously, more than 45% of Valencia region is declared as protected area. Valencia is among the three most touristic regions in Spain, with economic benefits to the territory, but tourism causes also negative effects to the environment, related to superficial water pollution and soil degradation. Moreover, water scarcity, provoked by several factors such as droughts, overuse and climate change (combination of dry seasons and occasional severe flooding) affects ecosystems of high fragility like natural parks.

Delta Lady is addressing the natural heritage of Valencia region's L'Albufera Natural Park which is also in the Ramsar list of wetlands of international importance since 1990. It goes without saying that increasing the valorisation of natural/ cultural heritage of the region in terms of exploitation and maintenance of the green infrastructures (rural/urban cycle lanes, green lanes) generates new employment niche based on conservation and management of natural/cultural heritage.

Therefore, there is a need to implement a series of actions to manage natural/cultural heritage around L'Albufera Natural Park in a more integrated and creative way, contributing to a higher business dynamization and employment generation in the Valencia Region, one of the regions with the highest unemployment rate in the EU.

In the territorial context the focus on ecosystem services is reflected in exploitation and maintenance of the natural/cultural heritage of Valencia region's L'Albufera Natural Park, in particular with a special attention to: Botanical route; De los Sentidos Route; El Saler Route; Gola de Pujol Route; Beach Route; Landscape Route; Vía Augusta route (longest Roman route in the Iberian Peninsula); Red Route: El Racó de l'Olla; Green Route:



Na Molins; Blue Route: Port Catarroja; Yellow Route: Dunas del Dosser; Tourism visits; Management Office; Environmental Promotion Office; Fauna Recovery Centre; Experimental Centre of Fisheries Culture; Forestry House El Saler; Natura 200 Network; LIFE Project.

In addition, the Delta Lady project is linked to the regional innovation strategy RIS3 Strategy of the Valencia Region and, in particular to Axe 1 (Quality of Life), that include supporting the sustainable tourism.

Thanks to the Delta Lady project, the CCCV_VR can promote the inclusion of the proposed Action Plan and achieve a more sustainable natural park in line with the EU political objective of achieving a greener Europe. The ERDF Regional Operational Programme Valencia Region 2021-2027 will be an important instrument for reaching this goal.

3. Interregional learning in Floating Cultures in River Deltas.



The exchange of experience among partners is an interregional learning process. It is the main catalyst for generating the expected policy change in the participating regions. The typical activities supported under interregional cooperation projects are activities such as seminars, workshops, site visits, staff exchanges, peer reviews. The learning process is based on the identification, analysis and exchange of knowledge and practices in the policy field tackled by the project.



The interregional learning process in Floating Cultures in River Deltas consisted of the following building blocks:

➤ **Good practices:**

Interregional cooperation projects need to analyse the experiences and/or practices exchanged **within the projects** and disseminate the most interesting findings. This is achieved by providing input into the programme's **online good practice database** which allows publishing the good practices identified on the project's website. Good practices from the Delta regions have been documented and are available on the project's website:

<https://www.interregeurope.eu/deltalady/good-practices/>

The CCCV_VR has participated in the process of exchanging good practices and has done a deep analysis of the project partners good practices before the elaboration of this Action Plan.

➤ **Case Study:**

In the framework of Delta Lady project, a Case Study it is used as a useful method for policy learning at partner and stakeholder levels. It will help to analyse the situation and challenges linked to the project issue and propose interventions to improve the region's targeted policy.

The CCCV has conducted its own Case Study to be implemented in the delta of the region: **“Sustainable tourist activities in the L’Albufera Natural Park. Regulation of Boat Trips”**. An in-depth analysis and knowledge of the regional situation was needed to identify the main challenges with the support of relevant stakeholders. A wide analysis has been done and policy improvements have been proposed in due sense, in collaboration with and support of the stakeholders members of the RSG_CV, and it will be presented to the responsible policy makers, politicians, and regional media, aiming at implementing the most outstanding findings and recommendations that can be transferable to the other delta regions.

➤ **Interregional Learning Sessions, exchange of experience:** project partners have participated in the different Interregional Learning Sessions combined thematic exchanges about Ecosystem Services in Delta Regions challenges and solutions with site and on-line visits due to the COVID19 crisis, to learn about what practices are developing in other Deltas and how the organisations act in each partner region. The CCCV has taken advantage of its participation in these sessions to exchange experiences which have served as a useful way to discover new mythologies and practices that could eventually be incorporated in the L’Albufera Natural Park.

➤ **Regional Stakeholder group (RSG):** members of the RSG-CV have been an active group and play an important role in the interregional learning process, in the identification and selection of good practices, as provider of information for the development of the case study, acting as a consultative body providing ideas and feeding their experiences for the project.



The RSG-CV is formed by representatives from a **quadruple helix approach**:

➤ **Government (GVA _Regional Government):**

- General Directorate of EU Funds, Regional Ministry of Finance and Economic Model (GVA), responsible for the management of ERDF in the Valencia Region.
- IVACE Innovation & R+D (GVA), Head of European Services and Projects Unit.
- Tourism Valencia Region Agency (GVA), Head of Product and Territory Service - Marketing Area and Tourist Product.
- L'Alfufera Natural Park:
 - General Director and Manager of the ANP.
 - Valencia Town Hall:
 - Area of Environment: representative of the Councillor for the Conservation of Natural Areas and La Devesa - Albufera.
 - Technical Office of La Devesa – Albufera.
 - VisitValencia, Responsible for City and Tourism Unit.
- DG of Natural Environment and environmental evaluation (GVA), Regional Ministry of Agriculture, Environment, Climate Change and Rural Development.

➤ **Academia:**

- Polytechnic University of Valencia (UPV):
 - Professor at the Polytechnic University of Valencia (UPV), Department of Cartographic Engineering, Geodesy and Photogrammetry, Higher Technical School of Architecture, UPV.
 - Professor at the Polytechnic University of Valencia (UPV), Director of the Rural and Agri-Food Engineering Department, Higher Technical School of Agronomic and Natural Environment Engineering, UPV.
- University of Valencia (UV):
 - Professor at the University of Valencia (UV), Researcher at the Valencian Centre for Risk Studies (CVER), and President of the Governing Board of the L'Albufera Natural Park.

➤ **Industry:**

- Chamber of Commerce, Industry, Services and Shipping of Valencia, responsible for Tourism Area.
- Institute of Energy Technology (ITE), Expert
- Hotel Association of El Palmar.



- Farmers of the La Vega, Department of R&D Projects.
- Regulatory Board of the Arroz de Valencia Denomination of Origin
- Tartana Rice, Manager.
- Guides Birding Association, Manager.

➤ *Community:*

- Fundació Assut.
- Spanish Association of Ornithology.
- Valencia Vela Latina Cultural Federation.
- El Palmar Boatmen Association.
- Acció Ecologista Agro.
- Tancat de la Pipa.

4. Inspirational hints for improvement of the policy instrument based on exchange of practices and Interregional Learning Sessions.

The CCCV_VR participation in the Delta Lady project is being an ongoing and intense learning process that is allowing us to shape several clear improvements for the preparatory activities for the policy instrument -ERDF Regional Operational Programme Valencia Region 2021-2027.

The learning process has not been a simple linear process, where we could just copy-and-paste a good practice from another partner region. Rather, it has been a continuous and interactive process of understanding and learning from and with the rest of the project partners. New insights involved in the interaction with partners during the interregional learning sessions, as well as from the organised online activities that have been taking place during the last months of the 1st Phase due to the impact of the COVID19 pandemic. The interaction at regional level, in the Regional Stakeholder Group of the Valencia Region contributed to this action plan as well.

The following actions are the most important concepts and good practices from the partners of the Delta Lady project that have inspired this Action Plan:

4.1. Concept: The Use of Electric boats in Fryslan region

Origin	This concept was shared by the Fryslan partner during the 4th Interregional Learning Event and Partner Meetings organised by the partners from River Blackwater Delta from Cork, Ireland celebrated on-line the 1 st and 2 nd April, 2020
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Brief summary	<p>Fryslân is a water-rich province, which makes it a unique place for water sports and recreation. In Fryslân there are designated areas where to sail quickly with your boat, the so-called fast sailing areas.</p> <p>The commitment to the green use of resources and protection of environment of the Fryslan authorities is clear and widely supported and that is why the use of electric boats in this region is higher than in any other delta region. Even though there are no specific regulations, there exists the Electric and Fossil-Free Sailing Foundation (SEFF) with the objective to turn the sailing model into a sustainable one (fossil fuels free).</p> <p>Currently in this region 3 different electric sailing routes can be found. They have also developed a digital map of the charging points: (https://www.arcgis.com/home/webmap/viewer.html?webmap=cafa3a2f5f594172a1c5da316516ec0a&extent=4.6896,52.771,6.582,53.541)</p> <p>Different studies have been conducted in the region regarding this topic:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A survey was conducted by the University of Groningen (RUG) last year (commissioned by SEFF). - Electric sail market analysis by RUG (in Dutch). - Research into the possibilities of realizing (partial) ‘Electric-only routes’ by Province of Friesland (in Dutch). - Multi-annual plan 2020-2025 by SEFF (in Dutch).
More info	<p>https://www.fryslan.frl/beleidsthemas/waterrecreatie_3397/</p>
Link to action plan	<p>This practice has served as an inspiration for our Action 1: Implementation plan for the promotion of the use of electric boats in the L’Albufera Natural Park: “El Palmar” pilot project.</p> <p>After conducting our Case Study on “Sustainable tourist activities in the Natural Park L’Albufera Natural Park. Regulation of Boat Trips”, we have seen a door for improvement in the transition from diesel engines to electric ones in the boats that transit on a daily basis around the L’Albufera delta.</p> <p>The Use of Electric boats in Fryslan region influences and inspires the electrical transition of the boats in L’Albufera Natural Park by means of the development of a planning project for the electrification of the fleet of boats. Meetings will be held with members of the quadruple helix in L’Albufera Natural Park to address the problem collaboratively. Funding will have to be found to carry out this measure.</p>

4.2. Good Practice: “Extensive Fishing in Comacchio lagoon”	
Origin	<p>The good practice “Extensive Fishing in Comacchio lagoon” has been shared in the 3rd Interregional Learning Event and Partner Meetings celebrated in Comacchio on the 17th and 18th September 2019 and submitted into the Learning Platform of Interreg Europe by the partner Po River Delta Park located in Emilia-Romagna region, Italy.</p>
Brief summary	<p>This practice consists in the reinvestment of revenues from traditional fishing activities into habitat/species conservation.</p>



	<p>The Comacchio lagoon requires a continuous and expensive management of the several water gates by the Po river Delta Park: they have to be opened and closed, in order to allow species movement and to supply fresh and sea water for habitat and species conservation.</p> <p>The incomes generated by fishing are reinvested by the Park in the environmental conservation and management of the lagoon, thus representing an implicit Payment for Ecosystem Service (PES) scheme which guarantees habitat and fishery conservation.</p>
More info	<p>https://www.interregeurope.eu/policylearning/good-practices/item/3226/extensive-fishing-in-comacchio-lagoon/</p>
Link to action plan	<p>This good practice has served as an inspiration for our Action 2: Navigation touristic activities: reinvest taxes in the preservation of the L'Albufera Natural Park (PES scheme).</p> <p>Making Payment for Ecosystem Services (PES) explicit allows a better implementation of existing practices. Informing users and providers on the ecosystem services involved and clarify relative monetary flows will increase awareness on the fundamental contribution of natural capital of the deltaic areas to human well-being.</p> <p>Based on estimates of the number of boat trips and visitors obtained in our Case Study on "Sustainable tourist activities in the L'Albufera Natural Park. Regulation of Boat Trips", this action will require a new municipal ordinance (València city) for sailing in the lagoon of L'Albufera Natural Park. The new regulatory text will first have to be drawn up and then approved by the plenary session of the City Council. After an information campaign for those interested, this measure will be implemented, which will allow part of the money collected by the boats to be reinvested in the management of the natural park (such as habitat/species conservation).</p>

4.3. Good Practice: "Hunting for wildlife conservation in the river Po Delta"	
Origin	<p>The good practice "Hunting for wildlife conservation in the river Po Delta" has been shared 3th Interregional Learning Event and Partner Meetings celebrated in Comacchio on the 17th and 18th September 2019, and submitted into the Learning Platform of Interreg Europe by the partner Po River Delta Park located in Emilia-Romagna region, Italy.</p>
Brief summary	<p>Hunting in Po river Delta Park is restricted to limited zones, regulated by specific rules, and managed with the sold of a number of hunting permits (i.e., authorization card for a given time lapse).</p> <p>The Park reinvests the cash incomes deriving by the sold of hunting permits in measures aimed at conserving and managing the ecosystems. Such measures also improve the fruition of the environment by hunters (i.e., the cleaning of the pathways, the maintenance of signs, surveillance activity, etc.). This represents an implicit Payment for Ecosystem Services (PES) scheme, aimed at regulating and controlling hunting while conserving wildlife and habitats and improving accessibility to natural areas.</p>
More info	<p>https://www.interregeurope.eu/policylearning/good-practices/item/3227/hunting-for-wildlife-conservation-in-the-river-po-delta/</p>



Link to action plan	<p>This good practice has served as an inspiration for our Action 2: Navigation touristic activities: reinvest taxes in the preservation of the L'Albufera Natural Park (PES scheme).</p> <p>Making Payment for Ecosystem Services (PES) explicit allows a better implementation of existing practices. Informing users and providers on the ecosystem services involved and clarify relative monetary flows will increase awareness on the fundamental contribution of natural capital of the deltaic areas to human well-being.</p> <p>Based on estimates of the number of boat trips and visitors obtained in our Case Study on "Sustainable tourist activities in the L'Albufera Natural Park. Regulation of Boat Trips", this action will require a new municipal ordinance (València city) for sailing in the lagoon of L'Albufera Natural Park. The new regulatory text will first have to be drawn up and then approved by the plenary session of the City Council. After an information campaign for those interested, this measure will be implemented, which will allow part of the money collected by the boats to be reinvested in the management of the natural park (such as habitat/species conservation).</p>
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Part III – Details of the actions envisaged.

Introduction of the actions

Based on the interregional learning process of the Delta Lady Project we have defined two complementary actions to be considered in the new text of the ERDF Regional Operational Programme Valencia Region 2021-2027, to improve its implementation and direct impact in our Delta.

The proposed actions will address the following specific lines:

- Promotion of efficiency in the use of resources and provide the L'Albufera Natural Park with green infrastructures.
- Valorization of landscape.
- Improvement of the Plan for the Use and Management of the L'Albufera Natural Park.
- Development of healthy leisure and touristic activities that have an economic impact in the development of the region.
- Connection between landscapes and relevant natural areas to bring visitors.
- Recovery of the natural and landscape heritage linked to historic, livestock and greenways.
- Include a PES scheme for ecosystem services to reinvest collected fees in providing improved services in the Park.

The actions address a different level of the implementation of the policy instrument, as follows:

At **macro-level** we will work on an improved strategic approach of the policy instrument by contributing to the definition of a mission-oriented innovation strategy for the new programming period, as discussed during the Delta Lady First Interregional Learning Event and Partner Event in Camargue. The objective is to try to include proposals in line with the proposed actions in the new operational programme “Valencia Region ERDF Operational Programme 2021-2027”.

At **micro-level** we will contribute to a stronger organisational capacity of the Natural Park Authority. The objective is that the proposed actions should be considered when the Park Authorities approve the new Navigation Ordinance of the Valencia City Council and the new Master Plan for the Use and Management of the L'Albufera Natural Park, both being drafted at the time of writing this document. Those are not the policy instruments addressed by our Action Plan but will be significantly and positively impacted.



ACTION 1: Promoting energy transition in L'Albufera Natural Park: electrification of tourism boats.

Relevance to the project.

Due to the research that has been done during the first phase of execution of the DELTA LADY project, the CCCV has identified the lack of specific measures for L'Albufera Natural Park addressing the objective 6.3.2 of the ERDF Operational Programme 2014-2020:

- Objective 6: Preserving and protecting environment, promoting resource efficiency,
 - ❖ priority Investment 6c: Conservation, protection, and development of natural and cultural heritage, and specific,
 - Objective 6.3.2: Protection, development, and promotion of natural areas of touristic interest.

This is the main reason why the CCCV_VR would like to help and guide the identification of action lines and the projects to be included in the next ERDF OP 2021-2027 for the region.

After conducting the Study Case "Sustainable tourist activities in the L'Albufera Natural Park. Regulation of Boat Trips", the CCCV has detected that the activity of boat trips has not stopped growing during the last years. This activity is also highly linked to restaurants and other cultural activities that are taking place in the Park: lateen sailing, fishing, environmental education, birdwatching, etc. Most important, the boats used for boat trips (touristic activities), which are the ones with the largest traffic in the lagoon, it would be possible to say that practically all, if not all of them, have internal combustion engines. This undoubtedly provokes a series of important impacts on the environment namely noise pollution, air pollution, fuel spills and chemical pollution.

The identification of this problematic, the inspirational good practices shared by the partners from Fryslan and Comacchio regions (see Part II, 4.1, 4.2, 4.3), but also the practices other partners are carrying out in order to protect the natural and cultural heritage, has led us to find a solution on this regard. In addition, a growing interest has been detected by different actors (citizens, universities, politicians, etc.) in this issue. It has also been possible to identify some initiatives underway whose interest is focused on the energy transition of boats in L'Albufera Natural Park.

The objective is to promote the electrification of the fleet of boats.

1. Nature of the action.

The CCCV will develop and implement the action 1 aiming at the electrification of the boat fleet in L'Albufera Natural Park. Specifically, the target is to electrify the tourist boats of L'Albufera Natural Park as a pilot experience.



Since 2018, the Fishermen's Community of El Palmar, together with the Chair of Urban Energy Transition and the Institute of Energy Engineering of the Polytechnic University of Valencia, have been studying the idea of replacing the current diesel engines of the boats of El Palmar with electric motors. [In this regard, the CCCV joins this initiative and with the Delta Lady Action Plan we aim at finally be able to develop an electric boat as a pilot experience.](#)

Based on some previous existing studies and data collected from the boatmen's work activity, the battery size, motor type and charging process will have to be calculated, which are essential parts to implement the action. The impacts of the current diesel-powered boats on L'Albufera Natural Park will be evaluated, as well as the benefits and reduction in the impacts of the electrical transition. Finally, considering the technical, economic and social aspects, an assessment will be made on whether it is better to make electric batteries removable, so that they can be charged from homes, or not to be removable and to set up a recharging area in a municipal dock.

This would begin by carrying out tests on a small group of boats and then gradually expand to the rest of the tourist boats located in other piers in L'Albufera Natural Park. It should be remembered that there are currently 1012 boats registered in L'Albufera lagoon and that the number of boats registered for tourist boat trips is 69 (although the latter represent the largest influx into the lagoon). In the sustainability plan of the action, the ecological transition should be extended to all types of boats in the lagoon.

The batteries, electric motors and installation would be an investment for the boatmen. Finding some funding will be highly recommended, actually the CCCV has already identified existing funding lines on this purpose: [Renewable energy and biofuels program 2021 promoted by IVACE](#). Recharging points, if implemented on public piers, would be an investment for the administration and here we have also identified existing funding lines: [Renewable energy promotion projects promoted by IVACE](#). Therefore, two parallel interrelated projects would be necessary, on the one hand, the electrification of the boats and, on the other hand, the installation of recharging points on the jetty.

According to previous work, the average number of boats working in L'Albufera Natural Park can exceed 43 boats, depending on the season. However, in 2020, there are 69 passenger boats registered in L'Albufera Natural Park.

The pilot experience should start with a small number of passenger boats to test and evaluate the experience, perhaps 1-5 boats, to be decided according to the funds and means available. In principle, a recharging post with two charging sockets would be sufficient. The most important thing is that this pilot project is perfectly scalable and replicable.

2. Stakeholders involved.

The following stakeholders are membered of the RSG_CV:



Generalitat Valenciana (GVA)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Managing Authority of Valencia Region FEDER OP 2014-2020, General Direction of EU Funds, decision making. • Fundacio Turisme Valencia, Expert • IVACE, European Programmes Unit, Expert
L'Albufera Natural Park	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Manager General Director of L'Albufera Natural Park, Advisory role
Valencia Town Hall	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Technical Office of La Devesa-Albufera, advisory role • VisitValència, Expert
Universities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • University Polytechnical of Valencia and University of Valencia, advisory role
Entrepreneurs/Industries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Valencia Chamber of Commerce, Expert • Institute of Energy Technology (ITE), Expert • Asociación de barqueros de El Palmar, President • Asociación de usuarios del Port de El Saler, President • Collective: El mirador – Paseos en Barca, Representative • Federación Cultural Valenciana de Vela Latina, President • Comunidad de Pescadores de El Palmar, President • Asociación de Guías de Birding de la Comunidad Valenciana, President
Local/Regional Communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assut Foundation, Expert • Tancat de la Pipa, Expert

Other stakeholders:

Valencia Town Hall	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Valencia Climate and Energy Foundation, Expert
Universities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chair of Urban Energy Transition and the Institute of Energy Engineering of the Polytechnic University of Valencia, Expert

Possible synergies - initiatives/partnerships:

Project proposal within the Participatory Local Development Strategies (PLD) approved for the Local Fisheries Action Groups (FLAGs) in the Valencian Community under the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (EMFF).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • El Palmar Fishing Community, Secretary and President • Chair of Urban Energy Transition and the Institute of Energy Engineering of the Polytechnic University of Valencia, Expert
Project proposal for the electrification of the engines of the L'Albufera tourist boats with funds from the EU Recovery Plan (Next Generation EU).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Valencian Institute for Business Competitiveness (IVACE), dependent on the Regional Ministry of Sustainable Economy, Expert
Carbon Neutrality Project Tourist Activity in Valencia City. Initiative to decarbonize navigation in the L'Albufera	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • VLC VisitValència (Foundation of Tourism of the Valencia City), Expert



3. Timeframe

The preparatory activities of the Action 1 started during the Phase 1 of Delta Lady project in parallel to the development of the Case Study: "Sustainable tourist activities in the L'Albufera Natural Park. Regulation of Boat Trips".

The implementation of the Action 1 will follow the next timeframe:

January - December 2020	Preparation of the Study Case on tourist navigation in L'Albufera Natural Park as a deliverable of the DELTA LADY project. This diagnosis lays the foundations for a sustainable management of this activity. It is mainly based on meetings with stakeholders and interviews with boatmen.
January - June 2021	Preparation of the action plan to guide the electrical transition of boats. Two meetings with members of the quadruple helix in L'Albufera Natural Park to address the proposal collaboratively. Presentation to the DG European Funds and IVACE the action plan and explore with them possible funding sources through the ERDF PO and others.
July 2021 – December 2021	Follow up on negotiations. Decision on the most suitable road map to include a public fund for the electrification of the fleet of boats in L'Albufera Natural Park: pilot experience.
January 2022- June 2023	In case of a positive outcome on negotiations and successful incorporation of the proposed action in the programming period, the CCCV_VR will support the implementation of the pilot project and will be a key Actor in the visibility through communication and dissemination activities. Estimated time for the opening of the call for proposal: second semester 2022. Estimated start of the implementation of the action: beginning 2023.

4. Costs and Funding sources

The development of the Pilot project in L'Albufera Natural Park: electrification of boats will have an estimated cost of 62,750 € (does not include the recharging point).

Development of the engineering project for the electrification of the fleet of boats in L'Albufera Natural Park (pilot project) could have an estimated cost of around 6,750 €. Prior consultations allow us to estimate the installation



needed to change an internal combustion engine from a boat to an electric one could be 11,200 €. In the absence of an engineering project, it is difficult to estimate what investment would be required for the installation of a recharging point at a public dock. In any case, it would be highly desirable to be able to count with public funds to help boaters change their engines.

The budget will be distributed in the following way:

Item	Unitary Cost (€)	Nº	Total (€)
Engineering project	6,750	1	6,750
Transition of an electric boat: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A suitable engine for the boats would cost around 5,000 € - Lithium-ion batteries of about 3,500 € - Charger of about 700 € - Manpower of about 2,000 € 	11,200	5	56,000
Recharging point at a public dock	can't know now	1	can't know now
		TOTAL (€)	

The funding sources will be distributed in the following way:

Funding Source	Co-funding rate	Comments
The Valencia Regional Government own funds	10%	To be explore during negotiation phase.
European Funds	50%	
European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (EMFF)		
Municipalities	20%	
Boatmen	20%	



ACTION 2: Introduction of a PES scheme in the boating touristic activities.

1. Relevance to the project

In L'Albufera Natural Park there is an increasing demand for tourism-related activities, such as restaurants, rice tourism, boat trips, bicycle tours, bird watching, environmental education, etc. This causes a growing influx of visitors, which is also driven by international tourism that has been showing increasing interest in this natural area.

Even though L'Albufera Natural Park remains one of the most important wetlands in the Mediterranean, there are a number of challenges facing the Natural Park today, such as:

- Improving water quality.
- Protection of flora and fauna.
- Increase investment in green infrastructure.
- Improve signalling.
- More information points.
- Greater availability of technical services in terms of time.
- Safeguard sustainable tourism and leisure activities.

It is, at this point, it is pretty clear that the L'Albufera Delta has a rich cultural, landscape and human heritage and is an essential region for socio-economic development. However, bearing in mind that there are currently no taxes on the use of certain infrastructures or on the development of activities that are clearly benefiting from the natural and cultural values of the wetland, the CCCV has concluded that the introduction of a PES Scheme in the Park could be a key Action to be considered at policy level.

In the framework of the Delta Lady project, the CCCV has developed a Case Study on tourist navigation in the lagoon, that it is an activity which has not stopped growing in recent years. Interviews conducted within the framework of this study showed that almost all boatmen would welcome the introduction of an environmental tax on the activity or use of public jetties. In return, they will expect seeing investment in the Park and adequate regulation of the boats, for instance.

Examples from partners like in Comacchio and Po Delta (see Part II, 4.2 and 4.3) has showed us that it is possible to include Payment for Ecosystem Services (PES) scheme in the management of some activities of the Delta. Thus, the incomes generated by the taxes could be reinvested by the Park in the environmental conservation and management of the lagoon. This is exactly what our Action 2 is about.

According to preliminary studies, it is estimated that every year up to 3,000 tourist boat trips are taking place in L'Albufera Natural Park. These trips transport up to 60,000 visitors per year. This data gives us an idea of the volume that the Park could be collected if, for example, a contribution of 1€ per ticket is considered. The income



collected would be invested, for example, in the environmental and landscape maintenance of the lagoon, ensuring an adequate flow of water and contributing to improve water quality, such as cleaning and dredging of sediments and/or obstructive elements in channels, restoration and regrowth of meadows, slopes and margins, planting of native species, in accordance with current regulations, or in the elimination of exotic species, etc.

2. Nature of the action

The CCCV_VR proposes the implementation of an Action aiming at introducing a PES scheme in the navigation touristic activities. The proposal will involve the application of taxes for the use of moorings, piers, and public ports. Charges will also be levied for the use of the lagoon. In principle, different fees could be applied depending on the type of boat and the different embarkation points used. The fees will be paid by the boatmen, who are likely to increase, [proportionally](#) the price of their tourist passes.

It would be necessary to draw up and publish a new municipal ordinance (València) for sailing in L'Albufera Natural Park (at this point, the current ordinance can be considered obsolete), and this policy measure could be part of the policy instrument we are addressing as part of the Delta Lady project: ERDF OP 2021-2027. This ordinance would define the instrument of the tax, from the types of payments, scope, terms of application, collection, control, destination of funds, etc.

A mechanism should be established so that the money collected by the local administration is then reinvested by the Park in the environmental conservation and management of the lagoon. The fee should be reasonably priced so as not to negatively influence boatmen. It may be advisable that, together with this action, which taxes their activity, the boatmen see a counterpart, such as a promotion or valuation of their work, better regulation, and control, as well as the establishment of channels of participation (governance) that allow them to have a voice in the reinvestment of the proceeds.

Action 2 is extremely linked with Action 1, and we consider this as a strength for mutual success. As an example, the introduction of the PES scheme could allow the reinvestment of taxes in the installation of charging points in the lagoon, at the same time that the electrification of boats is ongoing.

[Moreover](#), informing users and providers on the ecosystem services involved and clarify relative monetary flows will increase awareness on the fundamental contribution of natural capital of the deltaic areas to human well-being.



3. Stakeholders involved.

The following stakeholders are membered of the RSG_CV:

Generalitat Valenciana (GVA)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Managing Authority of Valencia Region FEDER OP 2014-2020, General Direction of EU Funds, decision making. Fundacio Turisme Valencia, Expert IVACE, European Programmes Unit, Expert
L' Albufera Natural Park	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Manager General Director Albufera Natural Park, Advisory role
Valencia Town Hall	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Technical Office La Devesa-Albufera, Advisory role VisitValencia, Expert
Universities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> University Polytechnical of Valencia and University of Valencia, Advisory role
Entrepreneurs/Industries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Valencia Chamber of Commerce, Expert ITENE, Expert Asociación de barqueros de El Palmar, President Asociación de usuarios del Port de El Saler, President Collective: El mirador – Paseos en Barca, Representative Federación Cultural Valenciana de Vela Latina, President Comunidad de Pescadores de El Palmar, President Asociación de Guías de Birding de la Comunidad Valenciana, President
Local/Regional Communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assut Foundation, Expert Tancat de la Pipa, Expert

4. Timeframe

The preparatory activities of the Action 2 started during the Phase 1 of Delta Lady project in parallel to the development of the Case Study: "Sustainable tourist activities in the L'Albufera Natural Park. Regulation of Boat Trips".

The implementation of the Action 2 will follow the next timeframe:

January - December 2020	Preparation of a case study on tourist navigation in L'Albufera Natural Park. This diagnosis lays the foundations for a sustainable management of this activity. It is based on meetings with stakeholders and interviews with boatmen.
January - December 2021	<p>Preparation of the action plan to guide the implementation of PES scheme in the regulation of the navigation touristic activities.</p> <p>Two meetings with members of the quadruple helix in L'Albufera Natural Park to address the proposal collaboratively, especially with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Valencia Town Hall: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Area of Environment: representative of the Councillor for the Conservation of Natural Areas and La Devesa - Albufera. Technical Office of La Devesa – Albufera.



January 2022 - December 2022	<p>Common work and collaboration between DG European funds and the CCCV on the consultative process of the construction of the new ERDF VR OP 2021-2027 to include this action in the new policy instrument.</p> <p>Follow-up on the approval and starting of the execution of the new policy instrument.</p> <p>Dissemination and awareness campaign to inform users and providers.</p>
January 2023 - June 2023	Support and follow the implementation of the action.

5. Costs and Funding sources

The drafting of the new ordinance would be the responsibility of Valencia City Council, the entity that owns the lagoon of L'Albufera Natural Park and is responsible for the material. It would require the work of a civil servant legislator, with the cost that this would imply to develop the new regulatory text, plus the time to be processed and approved by the full council.

A dissemination and awareness campaign should be carried out to inform users and providers of the ecosystem services in question and of the importance to the ecosystem of this measure. This could cost up to 10,000 €.

The funding sources will be distributed in the following way:

Funding Source		Co-funding rate	Comments
The Valencia Regional Government own funds		40%	To be explore during negotiation phase.
European Funds	ERDF ESF+ 2021-2027	20%	
	ERDF OP 2021-2027		
Municipalities		40%	