



Project number: LIFE15 NAT/IT/000989 – LifeTicinoBiosource

Annex II
Description of the project

A handwritten signature in blue ink, consisting of a stylized 'L' followed by 'B' and 'S'.



LIFE Nature and Biodiversity

Part A – administrative information





LIFE 2015

FOR ADMINISTRATION USE ONLY

LIFE15 NAT/IT/000989

LIFE Nature and Biodiversity project application

Language of the proposal:

English (en)

Project title:

Enhancing Biodiversity by Restoring Source Areas for Priority and Other Species of Community Interest in Ticino Park

Project acronym:

LifeTicinoBiosource

The project will be implemented in the following Member State(s) and Region(s) or other countries:

Italy Lombardia

Expected start date: 01/10/2016

Expected end date: 31/10/2020

LIST OF BENEFICIARIES

Name of the **coordinating** beneficiary: PARCO LOMBARDO DELLA VALLE DEL TICINO

Name of the associated beneficiary: Fondazione Lombardia per l'Ambiente

Name of the associated beneficiary: G.R.A.I.A. srl - Gestione e Ricerca Ambientale Ittica Acque

LIST OF CO-FINANCERS

Name of the co-financer: Fondazione Cariplo

PROJECT BUDGET AND REQUESTED EU FUNDING

Total project budget: 3,877,000 Euro

Total eligible project budget: 3,877,000 Euro

EU financial contribution requested: 2,326,000 Euro (= 59.99% of total eligible budget)

SECTOR

Nature



Coordinating Beneficiary Profile Information

Legal Name	PARCO LOMBARDO DELLA VALLE DEL TICINO		
Short Name	TicinoPark	Legal Status	
VAT No		Public body	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Legal Registration		Private commercial	<input type="checkbox"/>
Registration Date		Private non- commercial	<input type="checkbox"/>
Pic Number			
Legal entity is SME	<input type="checkbox"/>		
Employee number			

Legal address of the Coordinating Beneficiary

Street Name and No	Via Isonzo, 1		
Post Code	20013	PO Box	
Town / City	Pontevocchio di Magenta		
Member State	Italy		

Coordinating Beneficiary contact person information

Title	Dr.	Function	Forest Department Manager
Surname	Caronni		
First Name	Fulvio		
E-mail address	fulvio.caronni@parcoticino.it		
Department /	Department of Vegetation and Forests		
Street Name and No	Via Isonzo 1		
Post Code	20013	PO Box	
Town / City	Pontevocchio di Magenta		
Member State	Italy		
Telephone No	390297210226	Fax No	390297950607

Website of the Coordinating Beneficiary

Website	http://www.parcoticino.it
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Brief description of the Coordinating Beneficiary's activities and experience in the area of the

Ticino Park objective is to preserve and enhance the most relevant natural elements of the protected area: the river and other aquatic habitats, biodiversity, forests, agricultural habitats. In recent years the Park gave a special impetus to protecting fish-fauna and to supporting endangered species both through the direct support to the species and through the containment of invasive alien species. This was possible thanks to the direct management of a fish hatchery and to the management of exclusive fishing rights aimed at making sustainable fishing activity. Activities of monitoring and containment of invasive alien species, focusing primarily on the wels catfish (*Silurus glanis*), have been implemented too. Another focus of the Park is the conservation of birds: the area hosts 320 species, 90 of which are of community interest. Projects have been made to preserve the habitats of the most endangered species, especially aquatic and traditional agricultural habitats, like maintaining and increasing hay meadows.

Waters are constantly monitored in quality and Ticino Park plays a fundamental role in improving water quality in the river basin by constantly pressing local administrations to enhance the efficiency of wastewater treatment plants.

Forests are well managed and are rich of old grown trees; in the last years they were colonized by species not recorded before in the Padana Plain, like Pine Marten, Goshawk, Black Woodpecker and, recently, the Wolf.



COORDINATING BENEFICIARY DECLARATION

The undersigned hereby certifies that:

1. The specific actions listed in this proposal do not and will not receive aid from the European Structural and Investment Funds or other European Union funding programmes. In the event that any such funding will be made available after the submission of the proposal or during the implementation of the project, my organisation will immediately inform the Contracting Authority.
2. My organisation PARCO LOMBARDO DELLA VALLE DEL TICINO has not been served with bankruptcy orders, nor has it received a formal summons from creditors. My organisation is not in any of the situations listed in Articles 106(1) and 107 of Council Regulation No 956/2012 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 25 October 2012 on the financial rules applicable to the general budget of the Union (OJ L299 of 26.10.2012).
3. My organisation (which is legally registered in the European Union) will contribute 1,351,000.00€ to the project. My organisation will participate in the implementation of the following actions: A1, A2, A3, A4, A5, C1, C2, C3, C4, C5, C6, C7, C8, D1, D5, D7, D8, D9, E1, E2, F1, F2, F3, F4. The estimated total cost of my organisation's part in the implementation of the project is 2,859,000.00 €.
4. My organisation will conclude with the associated beneficiaries and co-financers any agreements necessary for the completion of the work, provided these do not infringe on their obligations, as stated in the grant agreement with the Contracting Authority. Such agreements will be based on the model proposed by the Contracting Authority. They will describe clearly the tasks to be performed by each associated beneficiary and define the financial arrangements.
5. I commit to comply with all relevant eligibility criteria, as defined in the LIFE Multiannual Work Programme 2014-2017 and the LIFE Call for Proposals including the LIFE Guidelines for Applicants.

I am legally authorised to sign this statement on behalf of my organisation.

I have read in full the Model LIFE Grant Agreement with Special and General Conditions and the Financial Guidelines (provided with the LIFE application files).

I certify to the best of my knowledge that the statements made in this proposal are true and the information provided is correct.

At Porto vecchio di Magenta on

Signature of the Coordinating Beneficiary:

Name(s) and status of signatory:

IL PRESIDENTE
(Gian Pietro Beltrami)

* When this form is completed, please print, sign, scan and upload it in eProposal

ASSOCIATED BENEFICIARY PROFILE

Associated Beneficiary profile information			
Legal Name	Fondazione Lombardia per l'Ambiente		
Short Name	FLA	Legal Status	
VAT No		Public body	<input type="checkbox"/>
Legal Registration		Private commercial	<input type="checkbox"/>
Registration Date		Private non- commercial	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Pic Number			
Legal entity is SME	<input type="checkbox"/>		
Employee number			
Legal address of Associated Beneficiary			
Street Name and No	Largo 10 Luglio 1976 n.1	PO Box	
Post Code	20822	Town/City	Seveso
Member State or other Country	Italy		
Website of Associated Beneficiary			
Website	http://www.flanet.org/		
Brief description of the Associated Beneficiary's activities and experience in the area of the			
<p>Fondazione Lombardia per l'Ambiente is a research body focused on three main objectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - monitoring and conservation of biodiversity and protected areas; - protection of the environment from various forms of pollution (air, water, soli); - environmental education and professional training about environmental topics. <p>We now describe in more details some of the activities of the Biodiversity and Protected Areas Office, that is involved in the present project proposal. The Office is regularly working with the regional government of Lombardy on topics related to planning, management and monitoring of natura 2000 sites, species of community interest and the Regional Ecological Network.</p> <p>Here is a list of some projects realized in the last 10 years:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Monitoring Plan of vertebrates of community interest in Lombardy 2) Atlas of the Special protection Areas of Lombardy 3) Regional Ecological Network of Lombardy 4) Atlas of the Sites of Community Interest of Lombardy 5) Management Plan of the val Grande National park - Wildlife 6) Action Plan for the conservation of red-backed Shrike (<i>Lanius collurio</i>) in Lombardy 7) Ecological connexion between protected areas North of Milan 8) Priority Areas for Biodiversity in Lombardy 9) Monitoring of birds of community interest in Val Grande National Park 10) Monitoring of birds of conservation interest in Ticino Park 11) Atlas of breeding and wintering birds of Ticino Park 12) LIFE "Gestire" - Scientific partner with regard to monitoring of fauna species of community interest 139 LIFE "TIB - Trans Insubria Bionet" - Monitoring of birds and mammals 			



ASSOCIATED BENEFICIARY PROFILE

Associated Beneficiary profile information			
Legal Name	G.R.A.I.A. srl - Gestione e Ricerca Ambientale Ittica Acque		
Short Name	GRAIA	Legal Status	
VAT No	IT10454870154	Public body	<input type="checkbox"/>
Legal Registration	224337	Private commercial	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Registration Date	16/01/1992	Private non- commercial	<input type="checkbox"/>
Pic Number			
Legal entity is SME	<input type="checkbox"/>		
Employee number			
Legal address of Associated Beneficiary			
Street Name and No	Via Repubblica, 1	PO Box	
Post Code	21020	Town/City	Varano Borghi
Member State or other Country	Italy		
Website of Associated Beneficiary			
Website	http://www.graia.eu		
Brief description of the Associated Beneficiary's activities and experience in the area of the			
<p>GRAIA Srl ("Gestione e Ricerca Ambientale Ittica Acque": environmental, aquatic, ichthyological research and management) has more than 20 years of experience on fish fauna managing and environmental engineering. Its personnel consists of more than 20 graduated (among which associates, employees, collaborators) in different specializations of natural sciences; particularly focused on aquatic disciplines. The multidisciplinary of the team grants a deepened approach to the faced projects and studies. In the last annual financial statement (2014) the production value was over € 2.200.000. GRAIA is registered at Schedario Anagrafe Nazionale Ricerche del M.U.R.S.T., and it is a consultancy society, leader in the field of conservation; fauna managing; aquatic ecosystems and wetlands; biological monitoring; planning and managing of protected areas, ecological networks, aquaculture facilities; environmental engineering and modeling.</p> <p>Of the hundreds of projects and works performed we mention: the research project "Sviluppo di metodologie per la progettazione, realizzazione e gestione di interventi idraulici ittiocompatibili"; various Life-Nature Projects as sub-contractor; an ongoing Life-Nature Project (Life11nat/it/000188) as partner. GRAIA associates play some important roles in the Italian scientific panorama, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • expert of the FFS (Freshwater Fish Specialist) group of the IUCN - dr. Cesare M. Puzzi • expert of scientific research of the Central Advisory Commission for Fishing and Aquaculture of MIPAAF - DG, sea fishing and aquaculture - dr. Cesare M. Puzzi; • ichthyological consultants to various provincial administrations; • member of the Scientific Committee CIRF "Centro Italiano per la Riqualificazione Fluviale" (Italian Center for River Restoration) - dr. Cesare M. Puzzi; • Members of AIAD "Associazione Italiana Ittiologi Acqua Dolce" (Italian Freshwater Ichthyologist Association). 			


ASSOCIATED BENEFICIARY DECLARATION and MANDATE

I, the undersigned, MATTEO FUMAGALLI (1), representing, Fondazione Lombardia per l'Ambiente FLA, Private non-commercial, , Largo 10 Luglio 1976 n.1, Seveso, 20822, Italy, VAT number , hereinafter referred to as "the associated beneficiary", for the purposes of the signature and the implementation of the grant agreement Enhancing Biodiversity by Restoring Source Areas for Priority and Other Species of Community Interest in Ticino Park with the Contracting Authority (hereinafter referred to as "the grant agreement") hereby:

1. Mandate PARCO LOMBARDO DELLA VALLE DEL TICINO (TicinoPark), Public body, , Via Isonzo, 1, Pontevecchio di Magenta, 20013, Italy, VAT number , represented by GIAN PIETRO BELTRAMI, (hereinafter referred to as "the coordinating beneficiary") to sign in my name and on my behalf the grant agreement and its possible subsequent amendments with the Contracting Authority.
2. Mandate the coordinating beneficiary to act on behalf of the associated beneficiary in compliance with the grant agreement.

I hereby confirm that the associated beneficiary accepts all terms and conditions of the grant agreement and, in particular, all provisions affecting the coordinating beneficiary and the associated beneficiaries. In particular, I acknowledge that, by virtue of this mandate, the coordinating beneficiary alone is entitled to receive funds from the Contracting Authority and distribute the amounts corresponding to the associated beneficiary's participation in the action.

I hereby accept that the associated beneficiary will do everything in its power to help the coordinating beneficiary fulfil its obligations under the grant agreement, and in particular, to provide to the coordinating beneficiary, on its request, whatever documents or information may be required.

I hereby declare that the associated beneficiary agrees that the provisions of the grant agreement, including this mandate, shall take precedence over any other agreement between the associated beneficiary and the coordinating beneficiary which may have an effect on the implementation of the grant agreement.

I furthermore certify that:

1. The associated beneficiary has not been served with bankruptcy orders, nor has it received a formal summons from creditors. My organisation is not in any of the situations listed in Articles 106(1) and 107 of Council Regulation No 966/2012 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 25 October 2012 on the financial rules applicable to the general budget of the Union (OJ L298 of 26.10.2012).
2. The associated beneficiary will contribute 50,000 € to the project. My organisation will participate in the implementation of the following actions: A1, A3, A4, C1, C2, C4, C5, C6, D1, D2, D4, E1, E2, F1. The estimated total cost of my organisation's part in the implementation of the project is 413,800 €.
3. The associated beneficiary will conclude with the coordinating beneficiary an agreement necessary for the completion of the work, provided this does not infringe on our obligations, as stated in the grant agreement with the Contracting Authority. This agreement will be based on the model proposed by the Contracting Authority. It will describe clearly the tasks to be performed by my organisation and define the financial arrangements.
4. I commit to comply with all relevant eligibility criteria, as defined in the LIFE Multiannual Work Programme 2014-2017 and the LIFE Call for Proposals including the LIFE Guidelines for Applicants.

This declaration and mandate shall be annexed to the grant agreement and shall form an integral part thereof.

I am legally authorised to sign this statement on behalf of my organisation. I have read in full the Model LIFE Grant Agreement with Special and General Conditions and the Financial Guidelines (provided with the LIFE application files). I certify to the best of my knowledge that the statements made in this proposal are true and the information provided is correct.

At SEVESO on 5 OCTOBER 2015

Signature of the Associated Beneficiary:

Name(s) and status/function of signatory:

MATTEO FUMAGALLI - PRESIDENT

1. Forename and surname of the legal representative of the future associated beneficiary signing this mandate.
2. When the form is completed, please print, sign, scan and upload it in eProposal.


ASSOCIATED BENEFICIARY DECLARATION and MANDATE

I, the undersigned, GENTILI GAETANO (1), representing, G.R.A.I.A. srl - Gestione e Ricerca Ambientale Ittica Acque GRAIA, Private commercial, 224337, Via Repubblica, 1, Varano Borghi, 21020, Italy, VAT number IT10454870154, hereinafter referred to as "the associated beneficiary", for the purposes of the signature and the implementation of the grant agreement Enhancing Biodiversity by Restoring Source Areas for Priority and Other Species of Community Interest in Ticino Park with the Contracting Authority (hereinafter referred to as "the grant agreement") hereby:

1. Mandate PARCO LOMBARDO DELLA VALLE DEL TICINO (TicinoPark), Public body, , Via Isonzo, 1, Pontevicchio di Magenta, 20013, Italy, VAT number , represented by GIAN PIETRO BELTRAMI (hereinafter referred to as "the coordinating beneficiary") to sign in my name and on my behalf the grant agreement and its possible subsequent amendments with the Contracting Authority.
2. Mandate the coordinating beneficiary to act on behalf of the associated beneficiary in compliance with the grant agreement.

I hereby confirm that the associated beneficiary accepts all terms and conditions of the grant agreement and, in particular, all provisions affecting the coordinating beneficiary and the associated beneficiaries. In particular, I acknowledge that, by virtue of this mandate, the coordinating beneficiary alone is entitled to receive funds from the Contracting Authority and distribute the amounts corresponding to the associated beneficiary's participation in the action.

I hereby accept that the associated beneficiary will do everything in its power to help the coordinating beneficiary fulfil its obligations under the grant agreement, and in particular, to provide to the coordinating beneficiary, on its request, whatever documents or information may be required.

I hereby declare that the associated beneficiary agrees that the provisions of the grant agreement, including this mandate, shall take precedence over any other agreement between the associated beneficiary and the coordinating beneficiary which may have an effect on the implementation of the grant agreement.

I furthermore certify that:

1. The associated beneficiary has not been served with bankruptcy orders, nor has it received a formal summons from creditors. My organisation is not in any of the situations listed in Articles 106(1) and 107 of Council Regulation No 966/2012 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 25 October 2012 on the financial rules applicable to the general budget of the Union (OJ L298 of 26.10.2012).
2. The associated beneficiary will contribute 50,000 € to the project. My organisation will participate in the implementation of the following actions: A1, A2, A4, A5, C1, C2, C3, C6, C7, C8, D3, D6, D7, D8, D9, E1, E2, F1. The estimated total cost of my organisation's part in the implementation of the project is 604,200 €.
3. The associated beneficiary will conclude with the coordinating beneficiary an agreement necessary for the completion of the work, provided this does not infringe on our obligations, as stated in the grant agreement with the Contracting Authority. This agreement will be based on the model proposed by the Contracting Authority. It will describe clearly the tasks to be performed by my organisation and define the financial arrangements.
4. I commit to comply with all relevant eligibility criteria, as defined in the LIFE Multiannual Work Programme 2014-2017 and the LIFE Call for Proposals including the LIFE Guidelines for Applicants.

This declaration and mandate shall be annexed to the grant agreement and shall form an integral part thereof.

I am legally authorised to sign this statement on behalf of my organisation. I have read in full the Model LIFE Grant Agreement with Special and General Conditions and the Financial Guidelines (provided with the LIFE application files). I certify to the best of my knowledge that the statements made in this proposal are true and the information provided is correct.

At Varano Borghi on 05/10/2015

Signature of the Associated Beneficiary:

Name(s) and status/function of signatory: Gaetano Gentili P
 1. Forename and surname of the legal representative of the future associated beneficiary signing this mandate.
 2. When the form is completed, please print, sign, scan and upload it in eProposal

G.R.A.I.A. s.r.l.
 Via Repubblica, 1
 21020 VARANO BORGHİ (VA)
 Italia I.V.A. N° 10454870154

President

Legal Name and full address on the co-financier			
Legal Name	Fondazione Cariplo		
Street Name and No	Via Daniele Manin, 23	PO Box	
Post Code	20121	Town/City	MILANO
Member State or other Country	Italy		
Financial commitment			
We will contribute the following amount to the project:	100,000 Euro		
Status of the financial commitment			
Confirmed	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
To be confirmed	<input type="checkbox"/>		
Comments			
<p>Cariplo Foundation is one of the main Italian banking foundations and operates in the fields of scientific research, arts and culture, social issues and the environment.</p> <p>The Foundation in the period 2007-2011 promoted the Call for projects "Protecting and appreciating the value of Biodiversity". In 2012 a new call for projects "Implementing the ecological connectivity" was launched.</p> <p>In 2009 the Foundation directly promoted the Feasibility study of the ecological corridor in the province of Varese. On the basis of this study, a successful application for a LIFE+ Nature Program 2010 contribution was presented by the Province of Varese: the project "TIB - Trans InsubriaBionet" got a major funding.</p> <p>In 2011 a new project called "GESTIRE - Development of the strategy to manage the Natura 2000 network in the Lombardia Region" co-funded by the Foundation was successfully presented by Lombardy Region on the LIFE+ program.</p>			
Signature of the authorised person			
At	Milano	on	26/10/2015
Signature of the Co-financier:			
Name(s) and status of signatory:	GIUSEPPINA CAZZETTA, PRESIDENTE		

* When the form is completed, please print, sign, scan and upload it in aProsocial

OTHER PROPOSALS SUBMITTED FOR EUROPEAN UNION FUNDING

Please answer each of the following questions:

- Have you or any of your associated beneficiaries already benefited from previous LIFE cofinancing? (please cite LIFE project reference number, title, year, amount of the co-financing, duration, name(s) of coordinating beneficiary and/or partners involved):

PARCO TICINO coordinated in the last years the following Life projects:

- 1) LIFE97 NAT/IT/004134 - "Valle del Ticino - Restoration of alluvial woods and oak woods along the Ticino River". Period: 01-APR-1997 to 31-MAR -2001. Budget: 688.029,05 €. EC contribution: 337.134,23 €. Coordinator: Consorzio Parco Lombardo della Valle del Ticino. Partner: AGIP DICR-IT, Autorità di Bacino del Fiume Po-IT.
- 2) LIFE00 NAT/IT/007268 - "Salmo Ticino - Conservation of Salmo marmoratus and Rutilus pigus in the River Ticino". Period: 01-OCT-2001 to 30-SEP -2004. Budget: 534,000.00 €. EC contribution: 240,300.00 €. Coordinator: Consorzio Parco Lombardo della Valle del Ticino. Partner: -.
- 3) LIFE00 NAT/IT/007159 - "Conservazione di Austropotamobius pallipes in due SIC della Lombardia" Period: 01-OCT-2001 to 30-SEP -2004. Total budget: 505,464.00 €. EC contribution: 224,729.00 €. Coordinator: Consorzio Parco Regionale della Valle del Lambro. Partner: Consorzio Parco Lombardo della Valle del Ticino.
- 4) LIFE03 NAT/IT/000113 - "Conservazione di Acipenser naccarii nel fiume Ticino e nel medio corso del Po". Period: 01-OCT-2003 to 31-OCT -2006. Total budget: 891,224.00 €. EC contribution: 534,734.00 €. Coordinator: Consorzio Parco Lombardo della Valle del Ticino. Partner: Parco Oglio Sud.

At present PARCOTICINO is partner of the following Life project:

- 5) LIFE11 NAT/IT/000188 - " CON.FLU.PO. - Restoring connectivity in Po River basin opening migratory route for Acipenser naccarii* and 10 fish species in Annex II". Period: 01-DEC-2012 to 30-JUN -2017. Budget: 7,088,476.00 €. EC contribution: 3,496,809.00 €. Coordinator: Regione Lombardia - DG Agricoltura. Partner: Consorzio Parco Lombardo della Valle del Ticino, Regione Emilia-Romagna - Direzione Generale Agricoltura, Economia Ittica, Attività Faunistico venatorie; Agenzia Interregionale per il fiume Po; Autorità di bacino del fiume Po; Provincia di Piacenza; Provincia di Rovigo; G.R.A.I.A. srl - Gestione e Ricerca Ambientale Ittica Acque.

FLA is partner of the following LIFE projects:

- 1) LIFE11NAT/IT/044 GESTIRE "Development of the strategy to manage the Natura 2000 network in the Lombardia region". Coordinator: Regione Lombardia. Budget: 3.259.700 Euro. EC contribution: 1.626.916 Euro. Period: 2012-2015. Partner: ERSAF, Fondazione Lombardia per l'Ambiente, LIPU - BirdLife Italia, Comunità Ambiente, CITES
- 2) LIFE10/NAT/IT/241/TIB "Tran Insubria Bionet - TIB". Coordinator: Provincia di Varese. Budget: 3.093.737 Euro. EC contribution: 1.545.425 Euro. Period: 2011-2015. Partner: Regione Lombardia, LIPU - BirdLife Italia.

GRAIA srl is partner of the following Life project:

- LIFE11 NAT/IT/000188 - " CON.FLU.PO. - Restoring connectivity in Po River basin opening migratory route for Acipenser naccarii* and 10 fish species in Annex II". Period: 01-DEC-2012 to 30-JUN -2017. Budget: 7,088,476.00 €. EC contribution: 3,496,809.00 €. €. Coordinators: Regione Lombardia - DG Agricoltura. Partners: Consorzio Parco Lombardo della Valle del Ticino, Regione Emilia-Romagna - Direzione Generale Agricoltura, Economia Ittica, Attività Faunistico venatorie; Agenzia Interregionale per il fiume Po; Autorità di bacino del fiume Po; Provincia di Piacenza; Provincia di Rovigo; G.R.A.I.A. srl - Gestione e Ricerca Ambientale Ittica Acque.

- Have you or any of the associated beneficiaries submitted any actions related directly or indirectly to this project to other European Union funding programmes? To whom? When and with what results?

None of the partner participated to projects financed with other EU funds with actions related directly

or indirectly with this project.

- For those actions which fall within the eligibility criteria for financing through other European Union funding programmes, **please explain in full detail** why you consider that those actions are better suited to financing through LIFE and are therefore included in the current project:

The Life+ programme is the best financial instrument for this project for the following reasons:

- it is the only instrument that could operate at the same time in different sectors (nature, economics, public awareness) having as aim the conservation of biodiversity such as the case of this project. Life is than the only financial instrument that could assure to converge different initiatives and competences towards common objectives;
- the aim of the project is basically related to nature conservation, in particular to safeguarding different animal species of community interest, listed in Annexes II and/or IV of Habitat Directive (92/43/EC) and Annex I of Birds Directive (2009/147/EC) and than the Life Nature & Biodiversity is the best European fund for financing the actions that are composing the project;
- due to the present economic context, the Life instrument is the only one that could grant to realize interventions focused on the preservation of species of very high conservation interest, that otherwise could not have a financial support at national or regional scale, with consequent degradation of populations that are hosted by Ticino Park, that represents the main source area of biodiversity for the Padana Plain (Bogliani *et al.* 2007);
- with specific regard to Action C4, related to agricultural activities, we verified that there are not possibilities to finance this activities through other funds, like the Rural Development funds of Regione Lombardia.



m_ante.PNM.REGISTRO UFFICIALE INTERNA.Prot.0018884.30-09-2015

LIFE15 NAT/ - A8

DECLARATION OF SUPPORT FROM THE COMPETENT AUTHORITY

Optional: in addition to the support of the necessary competent authorities as described in the guidelines for applicants, this form may also be used to indicate any other support to the project by important stakeholder bodies, administrative bodies or individuals that may be concerned by the project.

Name and legal status:

Ministero dell'Ambiente e della Tutela del Territorio e del Mare -Direzione Protezione della Natura e del Mare

MINISTERO DELL'AMBIENTE E DELLA TUTELA
DEL TERRITORIO E DEL MARE
Direzione Generale per la Protezione della Natura e del Mare

Full address:

Via Cristoforo Colombo 44 - 00147 Roma (Italia)

REGISTRO UFFICIALE - INTERNA
Prot. 0018884/PNM del 30/09/2015

Tel: 06 57223433/3428

Fax: 06 572234740

Email: pnm-udg@minambiente.it

Contact person (name and function):

Carmela Giarratano -Direttore Generale

Please specify whether, why and how you will support this project:

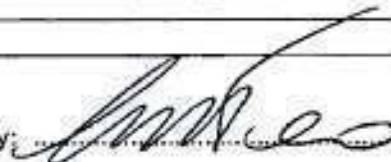
Il Ministero dell'Ambiente e della Tutela del Territorio e del Mare - Direzione per la Protezione della Natura e del Mare sostiene formalmente il progetto LIFETICINOBIOSOURCE in quanto può contribuire significativamente al raggiungimento degli obiettivi della Strategia Nazionale per la Biodiversità in linea con priorità e strumenti in essa previsti.

Questa Amministrazione si impegna ad utilizzare i risultati delle attività di progetto, per avviare, di concerto con Regione Lombardia, le procedure per la proposta di un nuovo SIC, sulla base della documentazione che riceverà dalla Regione medesima nel rispetto delle procedure nazionali.

At

on

Signature of the Competent Authority:



IL DIRETTORE GENERALE

Dott.ssa Maria Carmela Giarratano

Name and status of signatory:

Dott.ssa Maria Carmela Giarratano - Direttore Generale

LIFE15 NAT/ - A8

DECLARATION OF SUPPORT FROM THE COMPETENT AUTHORITY

Optional: In addition to the support of the necessary competent authorities as described in the guidelines for applicants, this form may also be used to indicate any other support to the project by important stakeholder bodies, administrative bodies or individuals that may be concerned by the project.

Name and legal status:

Regione Lombardia - DG Environment, Energy and Sustainable Development - Public authority

Full address:

Regione Lombardia - DG Environment, Energy and Sustainable Development - Public
Piazza Città di Lombardia, 1
20124 MILANO Italy

Tel: +390267655053

Fax: +390267654874

Email: mario_nova@regione.lombardia.it

Contact person (name and function):

Mario Nova - General Director of the DG Environment, Energy and Sustainable Development

Please specify whether, why and how you will support this project:

Regione Lombardia supports the project LIFETICINOBIOSOURCE "Enhancing Biodiversity by Restoring Source Areas for Priority and Other Species of Community Interest in Ticino Park" as its contents, objectives and expected results are coherent with the regional policies.

It is also in line with the project LIFE NAT/IT/0044 "GESTIRE - Development of a strategy for the management of Rete Natura 2000 in Lombardy" promoted by the Region as far as conservation of species and habitats goals are concerned, especially in areas that face pressures created by human and productive settlements. Moreover, Regione Lombardia has identified in the regional PAF (2013) the following actions that are consistent with the LIFETICINOBIOSOURCE project: "...management of lowland wet meadows [...] (point F.1 PAF), restoration and creation of forest habitats [...], restoration of wetlands [...], control of invasive species [...] (point F.1 PAF)".

Regione Lombardia also supports the creation of a new SAC for the protection of "Adriatic Sturgeon spawning sites" and the reintroduction of *Huso huso*, currently extinct in Italy.

At MILAN

on 1.10.2013

Signature of the Competent Authority:

Name and status of signatory:

Mario Nova - General Director

Ambiente, Energia e Sviluppo Sostenibile

(ing. Mario Nova)

DECLARATION OF SUPPORT FROM THE COMPETENT AUTHORITY


Optional: in addition to the support of the necessary competent authorities as described in the guidelines for applicants, this form may also be used to indicate any other support to the project by important stakeholder bodies, administrative bodies or individuals that may be concerned by the project.

Name and legal status:	
A.S.D. Sezione provinciale di Pavia convenzionata FIPSAS	
Full address:	
Via Pasino degli Eustachi, 2 27100 Pavia	
Tel:	+390382539423
Fax:	+390382539423
Email:	pavia@fipsas.it
Contact person (name and function):	
Roberto Battagin - president	
Please specify whether, why and how you will support this project:	
<p>A.S.D. Sezione Provinciale di PAVIA affiliated FIPSAS, Environmental Protection Association approved by Italian Environmental Ministry, represents more than 5.000 anglers and 40 local fishing clubs and angling society. It has licensed sections of canals and river in the Ticino Park for fishing and in particular includes the Ticino River <i>Acipenser naccarii</i> spawning site.</p> <p>FIPSAS PAVIA supports the project LIFETICINOBIOSOURCE "Enhancing Biodiversity by Restoring Source Areas for Priority and Other Species of Community Interest in Ticino Park" as its contents, objectives and expected results are coherent with fish conservation and management. It will collaborate with the project, in particular for the activation of the task force for the protection of <i>Acipenser naccarii</i> spawning sites (actions A5 and C7). It also supports the Reintroduction of <i>Huso huso</i> in Ticino River (action C8), involving the local angling societies in this action giving a logistic support in terms of volunteers, boats, experience and knowledge.</p>	
At	PAVIA
on	24-09-2015
Signature of the Competent Authority: 	
Name and status of signatory:	Roberto Battagin - president

LIFE15 NAT/ - A8

DECLARATION OF SUPPORT FROM THE COMPETENT AUTHORITY

Optional: in addition to the support of the necessary competent authorities as described in the guidelines for applicants, this form may also be used to indicate any other support to the project by important stakeholder bodies, administrative bodies or individuals that may be concerned by the project.

Name and legal status:	
Agenzia Interregionale per il Po (AIPO)	
Full address:	
Via Torquato Taramelli, 12 20124 Milano (Italy)	
Tel: +39 02 777141	Fax: +39 02 77714222
Email: ufficio-mi@agenziapo.it	
Contact person (name and function):	
Dott. Ing. Gaetano La Montagna - Responsabile dell'Ufficio	
Please specify whether, why and how you will support this project:	
<p>The Interregional Agency for the Po River (AIPO, the Italian acronym), is a public body that provides engineering and environmental services across the full spectrum of operations in support of interests of the Italian regions crossed by the Po river: mainly Piemonte, Lombardia, Emilia - Romagna and Veneto. Its mission is to provide flood protection and flood damage reduction. AIPO flood damage reduction efforts range from small, local protection projects (levees or non-structural flood damage reduction measures) to major civil engineering works (dams, flood control storage areas, etc) AIPO programs and projects most frequently are the result of close cooperation with national and local governments, academic institutions and other concerned groups.</p> <p>The AIPO, informed about the project LifeTicinoBiosource "Enhancing Biodiversity by Restoring Source Areas for Priority and Other Species of Community Interest in Ticino Park", supports the contents, objectives and expected results, as the Agency has in load the hydraulic management of the settling basins of Arno Stream, an area where lies one of the project actions (C2).</p>	
At Milano	on 30/09/2015
Signature of the Competent Authority: 	
Name and status of signatory:	Gaetano La Montagna - Responsabile dell'Ufficio



DECLARATION OF SUPPORT FROM THE COMPETENT AUTHORITY

Optional: in addition to the support of the necessary competent authorities as described in the guidelines for applicants, this form may also be used to indicate any other support to the project by important stakeholder bodies, administrative bodies or individuals that may be concerned by the project.

Name and legal status:

Elisabetta Parravicini
Presidente ERSAF

Full address: via Pola 12 .- 20124 MILANO

Tel: 0039 02 67404231 Fax: 0039 02 76404699 E-mail:
Elisabetta.parravicini@ersaf.lombardia.it

Contact person (name and function):

Enrico Calvo
Dirigente del Dipartimento Montagna e Sistemi Verdi

Please specify whether, why and how you will support this project:

ERSAF supporterà il Progetto nella condivisione delle informazioni e dei risultati del progetto LIFE11 ENV/IT/000168 MGN, per favorire l'applicazione dei modelli di valutazione dei servizi eco sistemici sviluppati da MGN.

Signature and date:

Milano, 6 ottobre 2015

Name and status of signatory:

Elisabetta Parravicini
Presidente ERSAF





LIFE15 NAT/IT/000989

**Part B - technical summary and overall
context of the project**



SUMMARY DESCRIPTION OF THE PROJECT (Max. 3 pages; to be completed in English)**Project title:**

Enhancing Biodiversity by Restoring Source Areas for Priority and Other Species of Community Interest in Ticino Park

Project objectives:

The main objective of the project is to preserve and increase the biodiversity heritage of Parco Lombardo della Valle del Ticino, a "source area" for the whole Padana Plain, since it represents the principal source area for most of the species of conservation interest related to this geographic area. The Park is a MAB UNESCO area and represents a key biodiversity area for Northern Italy, for the Mediterranean, and for the Alps. Actually it is the most important ecological corridor connecting Appennines and Alps, allowing many species to move towards the Alps and viceversa. The role of "source area" of biodiversity for many species of special concern is amplified by the role of ecological corridor.

Specific targets of conservation are more than 15 species belonging to different faunistic groups, from Insects (Lepidoptera) to Vertebrates (Fishes and Birds) for whom the Park hosts the most important known populations or is even the unique site of presence.

The target species of the project are all of community interest (Ann. II, IV, V Habitat Directive 92/43/EEC and Ann. I Birds Directive 2009/147/EEC); among them, two are priority species: *Acipenser naccarii** (Ann. II HD), which has, in Ticino river, the only wild, naturally breeding, population that is present in nature and *Aythya nyroca** (Ann. I BD), breeding in the Park with one of the most numerous population in Italy. Another target species that needs a particular mention is *Huso huso*, extinct more than 30 years ago inside the Adriatic Basin; for this species the project wants to reintroduce it in the Ticino river.

The target species are all threatened by the loss or degradation of their habitats, especially the areas suitable for reproduction and for feeding activities: intensification of agriculture has played an important role in the decline of typical species of open habitats, such as *Casmerodius albus* (Ann.I BD), *Egretta garzetta* (Ann.I BD), *Nycticorax nycticorax* (Ann. I BD), *Lycaena dispar* (Ann.II HD); the loss and degradation of wetlands is the cause of the decline of *Aythya nyroca** (Ann.I BD), *Himantopus himantopus* (Ann. I BD), *Ixobrychus minutus* (Ann.I BD), *Rana latastei* (Ann. II HD), *Rana dalmatina* (Ann. IV HD), *Hyla arborea* (Ann. II and IV HD); the degradation of streams, springs and secondary water courses is than threatening *Letentheron zanandreae* (Ann.II HD), *Cottus gobio* (Ann.II HD), *Cobitis bilineata* (Ann.II HD), *Sabanejewia larvata* (Ann.II HD), *Alcedo atthis* (Ann I BD).

Actions and means involved:

The project is composed by 4 main group of actions related to species and habitat conservation:

1) Actions for the conservation of *Acipenser naccarii* and the reintroduction of *Huso huso*:

- Action A2 for the designation of a new SCI (and starts the procedure to designate an SAC) to protect "Spawning area of *Acipenser naccarii*", the only spawning area known for this species in the entire world;

- Action C7 for an active defense of the spawning area, by a task force of stakeholders, together with the action A5 and adequately trained with the E8;

- Action C8 for the reintroduction of *Huso huso* in Ticino River (and therefore in the Po basin), extinct in Italy since the 80's.

2) Actions for the conservation of other fish species of community interest:

- Action C3 and part of C1 for the ecological restoration of springs and little streams (habitat 3260) for the conservation of fish species (many of them endemics) typical of these habitats, based on feasibility studies already produced and hereby annexed and of executive projects realized with A2.

3) Actions for the conservation of birds and butterflies:

- Restoration and creation of wetlands (including habitat 3150) for breeding, migratory and wintering birds (Action C1 and C5) with a feasibility study (annexed) and with executive projects realized with A2, at Motta Visconti and Bernate Ticino;

- Establishing of rafts with marsh vegetation for creating new sites for breeding, migrating and wintering birds (Action C2) with a feasibility study (annexed) and with executive projects realized with A2, at Lonate Pozzolo;

- Action C4 for the management of lowland wet meadows (habitat 6510) in favour of birds and butterflies, activated with Action A3;

4) Actions for the conservation of forest habitats of community interest (Annex I, Habitat Directive), in particular the habitats 91F0 and 91E0* (Actions C1, C5) at Motta Visconti and Bernate Ticino.

The results of the conservation actions will be monitored with the actions of the group D; the best efficiency and efficacy of the project will be pursued with the actions F, as well as the active comparison through networking with other projects.

The increasing of the awareness about the project and its aims on the local population will be pursued with the actions of the group E (website, nature trails, school packages, informative leaflets).

Expected results (outputs and quantified achievements):

The following results, under the general result to strengthen the role of the Park as source area for biodiversity, will be obtained at the end of the project:

- The designation of the SCI "Spawning area of *Acipenser naccarii*" of about 180 ha, that includes the lower part of Ticino River, and the activation of the process for the designation of a SCA;

- Creation and education of a task force focused on the control and protection of the *Acipenser naccarii* spawning areas that will be active even after the LIFE project;

- Reduce the presence, during summer, of the wels catfish (*Silurus glanis*) at least in 50 % of the *Acipenser naccarii* spawning areas;

- 5,7 ha of natural water habitats of target fish species, with an increasing equal to not less than 20% compared with their number before the actions;

- 9.000 square meters of new ponds (habitat 3150), 7.000 sm of new reedbeds and 8.000 sm of new wetland, with colonization of target species of birds in Motta Visconti;

- New embankment suitable for establishing a nature trail in Motta Visconti;

- Creation of 2 ha of habitat 4030 in Motta Visconti;

- Creation of 3 ha of new wet woodlands (priority habitat 91E0*) and restoration of 11 ha of riparian mixed forests (habitat 91F0) in Motta Visconti;

- Creation and restoration of 4 ha woodland (priority habitat 91E0*) and creation and restoration of 12 ha of riparian mixed forests (habitat 91F0) in Bernate Ticino;

- Restoration of 6.500 square metres of wetlands (habitat 3150) in Bernate Ticino;

- 4.000 sm of floating rafts with marsh vegetation and with gravel, with colonization of birds target species, in the basins of Arno stream, at Lonate Pozzolo;

- 60 ha of lowland wet meadows ("marcite") (habitat 6510) flooded in winter, in favour of wintering birds, in various localities of Milano and Pavia provinces;

- 15 ha of lowland wet meadows (habitat 6510) flooded in autumn, in favour of migratory birds, in various localities of Milano and Pavia provinces;

- Reintroduction in Italy of *Huso huso* inside the Park structures, where supposedly not less than 1.000 sturgeon juveniles will be released into the wild during the project;

- A didactic program that involves primary school of 1st and 2nd level.

Is your project significantly climate-related? Yes No

The project includes the afforestation/reforestation and forestry requalification of a total area of 30 ha (in particular actions C1, C5); specifically afforestation and reforestation projects have been included in the Kyoto Protocol Clean Development Mechanism Framework (CDM-AR), because of their significant contribution to carbon fixation, being recognized as an optimal strategy for mitigating atmospheric CO₂ increases.

Also interventions of requalification and creation of aquatic ecosystems and wetlands (actions C1, C2, C3, C5, C6) all contribute to re-fixing the atmospheric CO₂ in ecosystems through photosynthesis because they contrast land degradation allocating water to Clean Development Mechanism, which require water from the ecosystems for carbon sequestration through evapotranspiration.

Also practices of management of lowland wet meadows applied and promoted with actions C4 and E2 contribute to carbon fixation, because flooding of grasslands in autumn and winter will allow vegetation to grow also in these seasons, contributing to CO₂ fixation.

All the interventions of ecosystems requalification (Actions C1, C2, C3, C4, C5, C6) are climate-related because they contribute to mitigate fragmentation of ecological corridors (in particular the ecological corridor between the Alps and the Ticino valley), of outstanding importance for migrating species, fragmented as a result of land degradation caused by human activities and by the resulting climate changes.

The proposal addresses the following project topic(s):

- Projects aimed at improving the conservation status of habitat types or species (including bird species) of Community Interest, targeting the Natura 2000 sites proposed or designated for these habitat types or species.
- Projects aimed at improving the conservation status of habitat types in Natura 2000 sites or species (including bird species) of Community Interest, provided, their status is not "favourable/secure and not declining" or "unknown" according to the most recent overall assessments that Member States have provided at the relevant geographic level according to Article 17 of the Habitats Directive or to the most recent assessments according to Article 12 Birds Directive and EU-level bird assessments.

Reasons why the proposal falls under the selected project topic(s):

Habitats and species in Natura 2000 sites.

*Acipenser naccarii** (Ann. II HD), *Aythya nyroca** (Ann. II BD), *Huso huso* (Ann. V HD), *Casmerodius albus* (Ann. I BD), *Egretta garzetta* (Ann. I BD), *Nycticorax nycticorax* (Ann. I BD), *Himantopus himantopus* (Ann. I BD), *Lycaena dispar* (Ann. II HD), *Ixobrychus minutus* (Ann. I BD), *Alcedo atthis* (Ann. I BD), *Rana latastei* (Ann. II HD), *Rana dalmatina* (Ann. IV HD), *Hyla arborea* (Ann. IV HD), *Letenitheron zanandreae* (Ann. II HD), *Cottus gobio* (Ann. II HD), *Cobitis bilineata* (Ann. II HD), *Sabanejewia larvata* (Ann. II HD). The actions will be realized inside 5 SCI and 1 SPA (SPA IT2080301 "Boschi del Ticino", SCI IT2080019 "Boschi di Vaccarizza", SCI IT2010014 "Turbigaccio, Boschi di Castelletto e Lanca di Bernate", SCI IT2050005 "Boschi della Fagiana", SCI IT2080002 "Basso corso e sponde del Ticino", SCI IT2080014 "Boschi Siro Negri e Moriano").

Habitats and species in unfavourable or declining status.

*Acipenser naccarii** (CR1, SCM2), *Aythya nyroca** (SPEC1), *Huso huso* (EX1), *Ixobrychus minutus* (SPEC3), *Alcedo atthis* (All I BD, ERLB), *Rana latastei* (VU1, SIP2), *Rana dalmatina* (LC1, SIP2), *Letenitheron zanandreae* (LC1, SCP2), *Aythya ferina* (SPEC 2, ERLB 2015), *Vanellus vanellus* (SPEC2, ERLB), *Alauda arvensis* (SPEC2), *Anthus pratensis* (ERLB), *Fringilla montifringilla* (ERLB).



GENERAL DESCRIPTION OF THE AREA / SITE(S) TARGETED BY THE PROJECT

Name of the project area:

Ticino Park source areas

Surface area (ha): 900.000

Surface description: Existing and potential source areas located in 5 SCI and 1 SPA included in Ticino Park

EU protection status:

SPA NATURA 2000 Code IT2080301 "Boschi del Ticino"pSCI NATURA 2000 Code SCI IT2080019, SCI IT2010014, SCI IT2050005, SCI IT2080002, SCI IT2080014

Other protection status according to national or regional legislation:

- Regional Park (Parco regionale Lombardo della Valle del Ticino; L.R. 9/1/1974, n. 2)

- Natural Park (Parco Naturale della Valle del Ticino; L.R.12/12/2002 n. 31)

- UNESCO Biosphere Reserve "Valle del Ticino"

The Arno basins (Action C2) are in a proposed SCI/SPA "Brughiere di Malpensa e di Lonate".

Ticino River Valley has been recently proposed (2014) as a RAMSAR site (Wetland of international importance); procedure activated by Ministry of Environment.

Main land uses and ownership status of the project area:

SPA IT2080301 "Boschi del Ticino":

Broadleaved deciduous woodland: 76%

Inland unvegetated or sparsely vegetated habitats: 9%

Inland surface waters: 2%

Other: 13%

SCI IT2080019 "Boschi di Vaccarizza":

Inland surface waters: 36%

Broadleaved deciduous (B. D.) forestry plantations: 28%

B. D. woodland: 20%

Other: 16%

SCI IT2010014 "Turbigaccio, Boschi di Castelletto e Lanca di Bernate"

B. D. woodland: 69%

Rice fields: 33%

Inland surface waters: 10%

Other: 12%

SCI IT2050005 "Boschi della Fagiana"

B. D. woodland: 40%

Inland surface waters: 17%

Other: 14%

SCI IT2080002 "Basso corso e sponde del Ticino"

B. D. woodland: 36%

Extensive cereal cultures: 31%

B. D. forestry plantations: 20%

Other: 13%

SCI IT2080014 "Boschi Siro Negri e Moriano"

B. D. woodland: 30%

B. D. forestry plantations: 27%

Inland surface waters: 19%

Rice fields: 10%

Other: 14%

Each of the cited areas is property of Parco del Ticino or state-owned (Demanio dello Stato), with the exception of the areas subjected to C4 Action, which are private properties.

Scientific description of project area:

With regard to the main areas of intervention we give the following descriptions:

1) "I Geraci", Motta Visconti (MI)

Action C1 will be realized in an area that is owned by the Park and is located in the central sector of the Park, close to the river Ticino, inside the SCI IT2080002 "Basso corso e sponde del Ticino". The habitats include old branches of the river, woodlands, farmlands and patches of dry habitats.

2) Arno stream settling basins, Castano Primo (MI)

Action C2 will be realized at the basins of Arno stream, that are located in the northern sector of the Park. It is an area of high importance for waterbirds, where have been so far recorded 228 species, including breeding Pochard, Tufted Duck, Ferruginous Duck (one of the few breeding sites in Italy for these species).

3) Ramo Delizia, Magenta(MI) Ramo Morto (Turbigo, MI) and Gravellone Vecchio (Pavia, PV)

Action C3 will be realized along secondary branches of Ticino river, inside a mosaic of woodlands, streams, bushlands and small dry grasslands. Ramo Delizia is located inside the Nature Reserve "La Fagiana" and the SCI IT2050005 "Boschi della Fagiana"

4) Maresco di Villa Reale, Vigevano (PV)

Action C3 will be realized in an area of wet grasslands, ponds, stream and streams. The area is owned by the Park and is included in the SCI IT2080002 "Basso corso e sponde del Ticino".

5) Middle-lower reach of Ticino River

Actions A2, C7 and C8 will be realized in the southern sector of Ticino river, between Pavia and the confluence with Po River, that only known site in the world for breeding *Acipenser naccarii*.

7) Forests and wetlands at Bernate Ticino

Action C5 and C6 will be realized in a degraded area, recently bought by the Park, where used to be present some buildings close to the river that were recently removed, and in the framework of the LIFE project will be reconverted in an area of forest habitats and wetlands.

The sites of intervention are located along the Ticino river Valley, included in between Lake Maggiore (north) and Po river (south).

The northern sector is dry and is characterized by the presence of the last large wetlands (Calluno-Genistion) of Padana Plain and by pine woodlands (*Pinus sylvestris*).

The central and southern sectors are characterized by habitats like woodlands (Oak forests, *Salicion albae*, *Alnion glutinosae*), wetlands (*Phragmition*, *Magnocarition*), patches of dry grasslands, a large network of channels, streams and springs.

Farmlands mainly include large surfaces of hay meadows, ricefields, cereals, alpha-alpha.

Importance of the project area for biodiversity and/or for the conservation of the species /habitat types targeted at regional, national and EU level (give quantitative information if possible):

Ticino valley has a mosaic of natural habitats that is unique in the Padana plain and is the most important ecological corridor between the Apennines and the Alps, linking in this way Southern Europe with Central Europe (Bogliani et al. 2007).

The site is of outstanding importance for breeding, migratory and wintering birds and hosts 320 species, 90 of which are of community interest (Casale 2015). With regard to water birds, the area hosts:

- heronries that include all the European colonial herons (*Ardea cinerea*, *Ardea purpurea*, *Casmerodius albus*, *Egretta garzetta*, *Nycticorax nycticorax*, *Ardeola rallodes*, *Bubulcus ibis*);
- breeding colonies of *Sterna hirundo*;
- a large breeding population (the largest in Lombardy) of *Alcedo atthis*;
- more than 20.000 wintering waterbirds, with average number of 20.653 in the last 11 years (the Park is candidate as a Ramsar site);
- the largest wintering populations in Lombardy of *Anas platyrhynchos*, *Anas crecca*, *Egretta garzetta*, *Casmerodius albus*;
- one the largest wintering population in Italy of *Aythya fuligula*;
- wintering birds of conservation interest that are rare in Southern Europe such as *Gavia arctica*, *Mergellus albellus*, *Podiceps grisegena*, *Bucephala clangula*.

Forest habitats include:

- 5 breeding species of Piciformes: *Dendrocopos major*, *Dendrocopos minor*, *Picus viridis*, *Jinx torquilla* and especially the largest breeding population in the Padana Plain of *Dryocopus martius*;

Important breeding populations of *Pernis apivorus*, *Mivus migrans*, *Accipiter*

gentilis (the largest breeding population in Padana Plain), *Falco subbuteo*;

Farmlands include:

- Important breeding populations of: *Ciconia ciconia*, *Lanius collurio*, *Coturnix coturnix*, *Emberiza calandra*, *Upupa epops*, *Alauda arvensis*;
- large breeding colonies of *Himantopus himantopus* and *Vanellus vanellus*;
- Important wintering populations of: *Falco peregrinus*, *Circus cyaneus*, *Vanellus vanellus*, *Gallinago gallinago*, *Lanius excubitor*.

The area than hosts important fish species such as the following that are endemic of the Padana Plain: *Knipowitschia punctatissima*, *Chondrostoma soetta*, *Chondrostoma genei*, *Rutilus pigus*, *Rutilus erythrophthalmus*, *Orsinogobius punctatissimus*, *Salmo marmoratus*, *Lethenteron zanandreae*.

Mammals include the last population of *Lutra lutra* of Northern Italy, reintroduced by the Park.

Amphibians include the largest known populations of *Rana latastei* and *Pelobates fuscus insubricus* (priority species for the HD), both endemic of the Padana Plain.

Dragonflies include species of community interest such as *Gomphus flavine*, *Ophiogomphus cecilia*, *Oxygastra curtisii*, *Sympecma paedisca*.

Flora include species of conservation species, such as *Isoetes malinverniana*, *Marsilea quadrifolia*, *Sagittaria sagittifolia*, *Hottonia palustris*, *Salvinia natans*, *Myricaria germanica*, *Trapa natans*, *Iris sibirica*, *Pulsatilla montana*, *Platanthera bifolia*, *Cephalanthera longifolia*, *Orchis militaris*, *O. morio*, *O. tridentata* and *O. ustulata*.

For Natura 2000 sites that are included in the project we give the following brief descriptions:

SPA IT2080301 "Boschi del Ticino"

The area follows the main course of Ticino and include the river (breeding Kingfisher) and related water habitats, large broadleaved forests (breeding habitat for Black Woodpecker, Honey Buzzard, Black Kite), farmland (mainly lowlands hay grasslands, important for breeding Red - Backed Shrike), heathlands (mainly important for breeding Nightjar) and arid grasslands (with *Lycaena dispar*, Red-Backed Shrike, Orchids and other plant species of conservation interest).

SCI IT2010014 "Turbigaccio, Boschi di Castelletto e Lanca di Bernate"

The area includes a dead branch of the river (in Italian "lanca") of great importance for waterbirds, a trait of Ticino river (breeding Kingfisher, wintering Smew) with gravel islands (breeding Common Tern), large broadleaved forests (breeding Black Woodpecker, Nightjar, Honey Buzzard, Black Kite), large lowland flooded meadows (important for *Lycaena dispar* and wintering habitat for many waders and pipits, including Curlew, Lapwing, Great White Egret, Little Egret, Meadow Pipit, and migratory birds like Montague's Harrier).

SCI IT2050005 "Boschi della Fagiana"

The area includes a trait of Ticino river (breeding Kingfisher) with gravel islands

(breeding Common Tern), large broadleaved forests (breeding Black Woodpecker, Nightjar, Honey Buzzard, Black Kite), ricefields (migratory and wintering habitat for many waterbirds, including Eurasian Crane, Lapwing, Great White Egret, Meadow Pipit, Linnet).

SCI IT2080002 “Basso corso e sponde del Ticino”

The area includes a trait of Ticino river (breeding Kingfisher) with gravel islands (breeding Stone Curlew, Little Tern and Common Tern), large broadleaved forests (breeding Black Woodpecker, Nightjar, Honey Buzzard, Black Kite), lowland hay meadows (important for *Lycaena dispar*, Lesser Kestrel, Hen Harrier, Marsh Harrier, Montague's Harrier, Lapwing, Woodlark, Red-Backed Shrike), ricefields (migratory and wintering habitat for many waterbirds, including Bittern, Eurasian Crane, Ruff, Wood Sandpiper, Lapwing, Little Egret, Night Heron, Great White Egret, Hen Harrier, Marsh Harrier, Meadow Pipit, Linnet).

SCI IT2080014 “Boschi Siro Negri e Moriano”

The area includes a trait of Ticino river (breeding Kingfisher) with gravel islands (breeding Stone Curlew and Common Tern), large broadleaved forests (breeding White Stork, Black Woodpecker, Nightjar, Honey Buzzard, Black Kite), lowland hay meadows (important for *Lycaena dispar*, Lesser Kestrel, Hen Harrier, Marsh Harrier, Montague's Harrier, Lapwing, Woodlark, Red-Backed Shrike), ricefields (migratory and wintering habitat for many waterbirds, including Bittern, Black Stork, Eurasian Crane, Ruff, Wood Sandpiper, Lapwing, Little Egret, Night Heron, Great White Egret, Hen Harrier, Marsh Harrier, Meadow Pipit, Linnet).

SCI IT2080019 “Boschi di Vaccarizza”

The area includes a trait of Ticino and Po rivers (regular presence of *A. naccarii** and breeding Kingfisher) with sandy islands (breeding Common Tern, Little Tern and Stone Curlew), relict broadleaved forests and farmland (breeding Red Backed Shrike, migratory Red-footed Falcon and Montague's Harrier).

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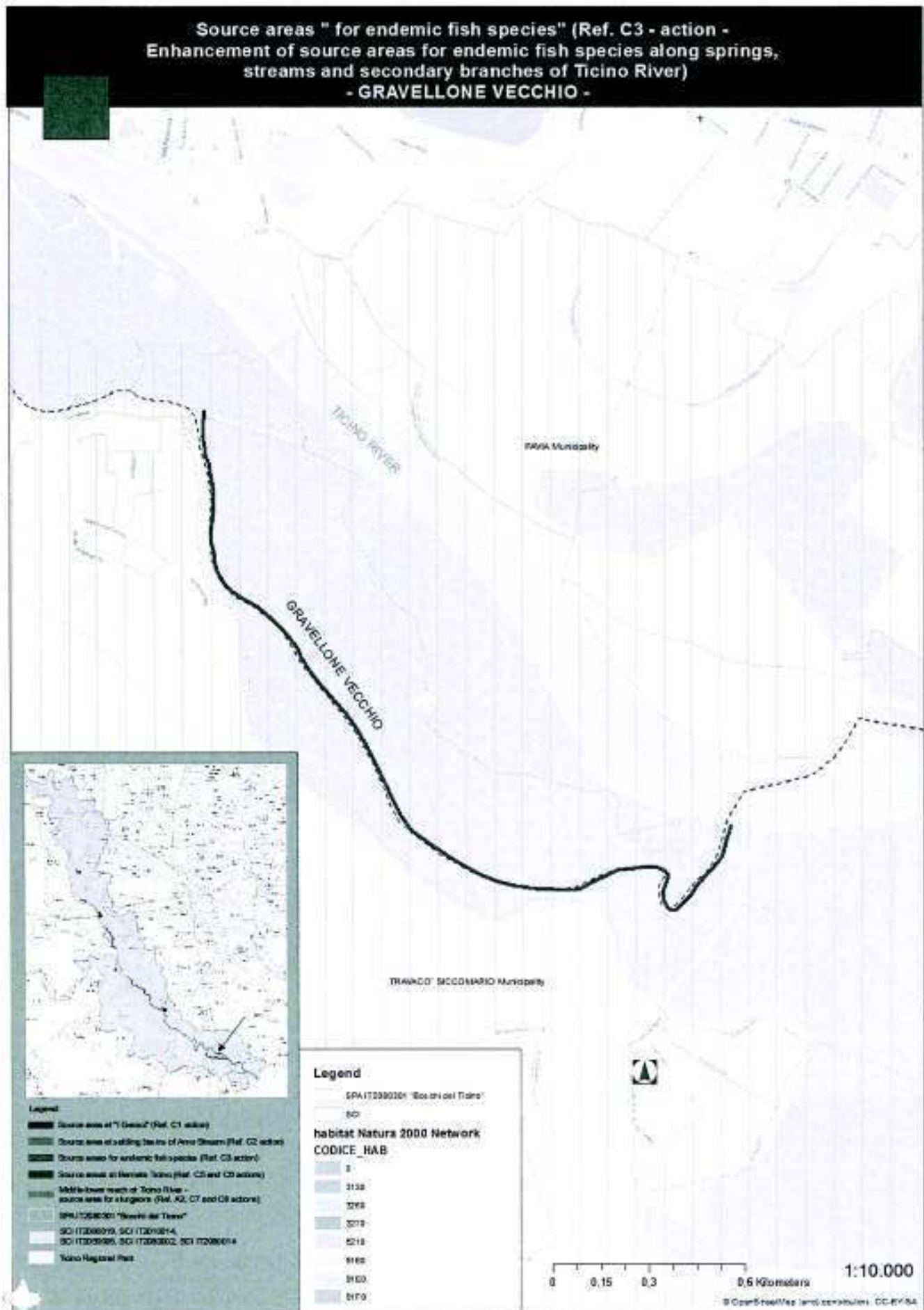
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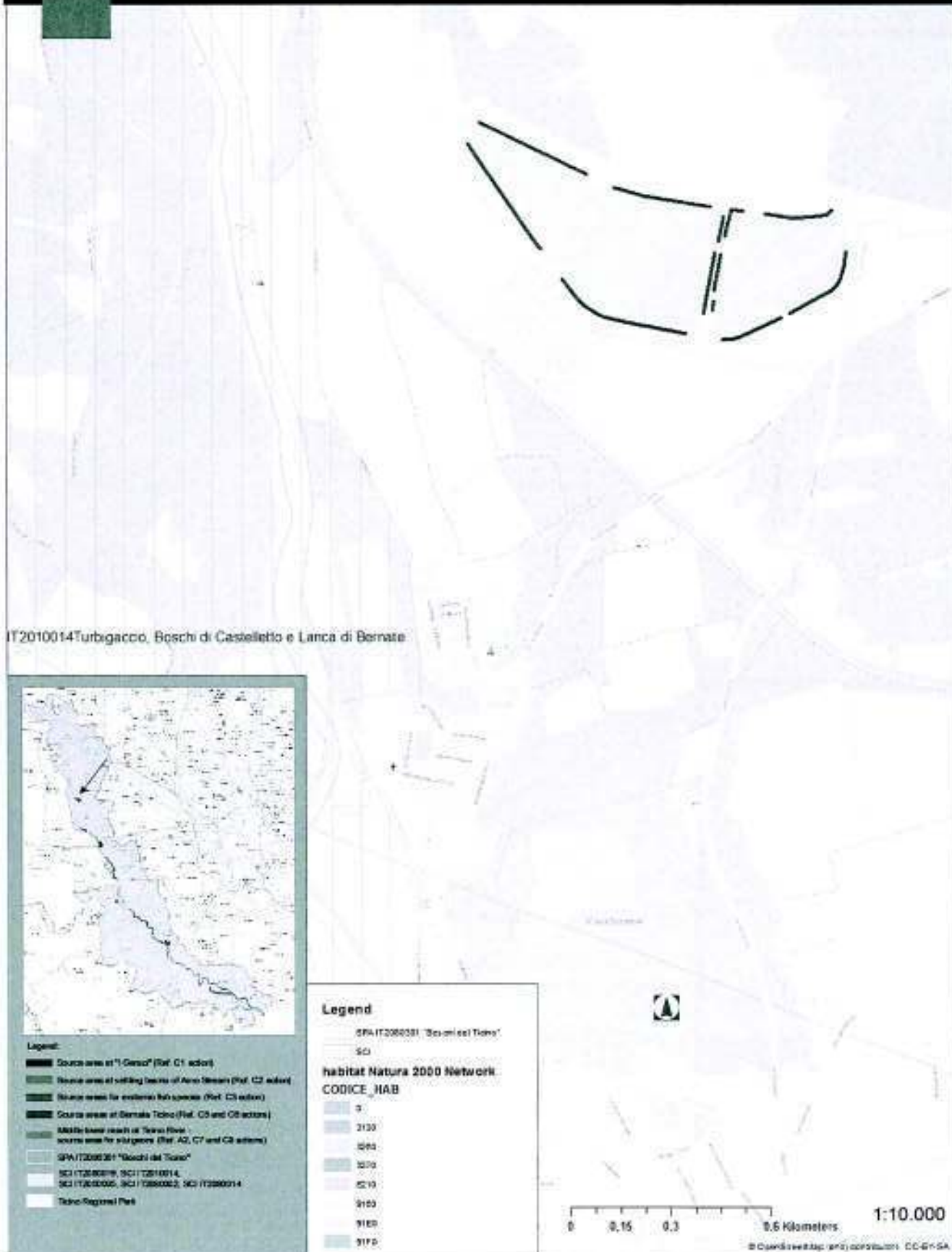


Name of the picture: Source areas "for endemic fish species" - GRAVELLONE VECCHIO

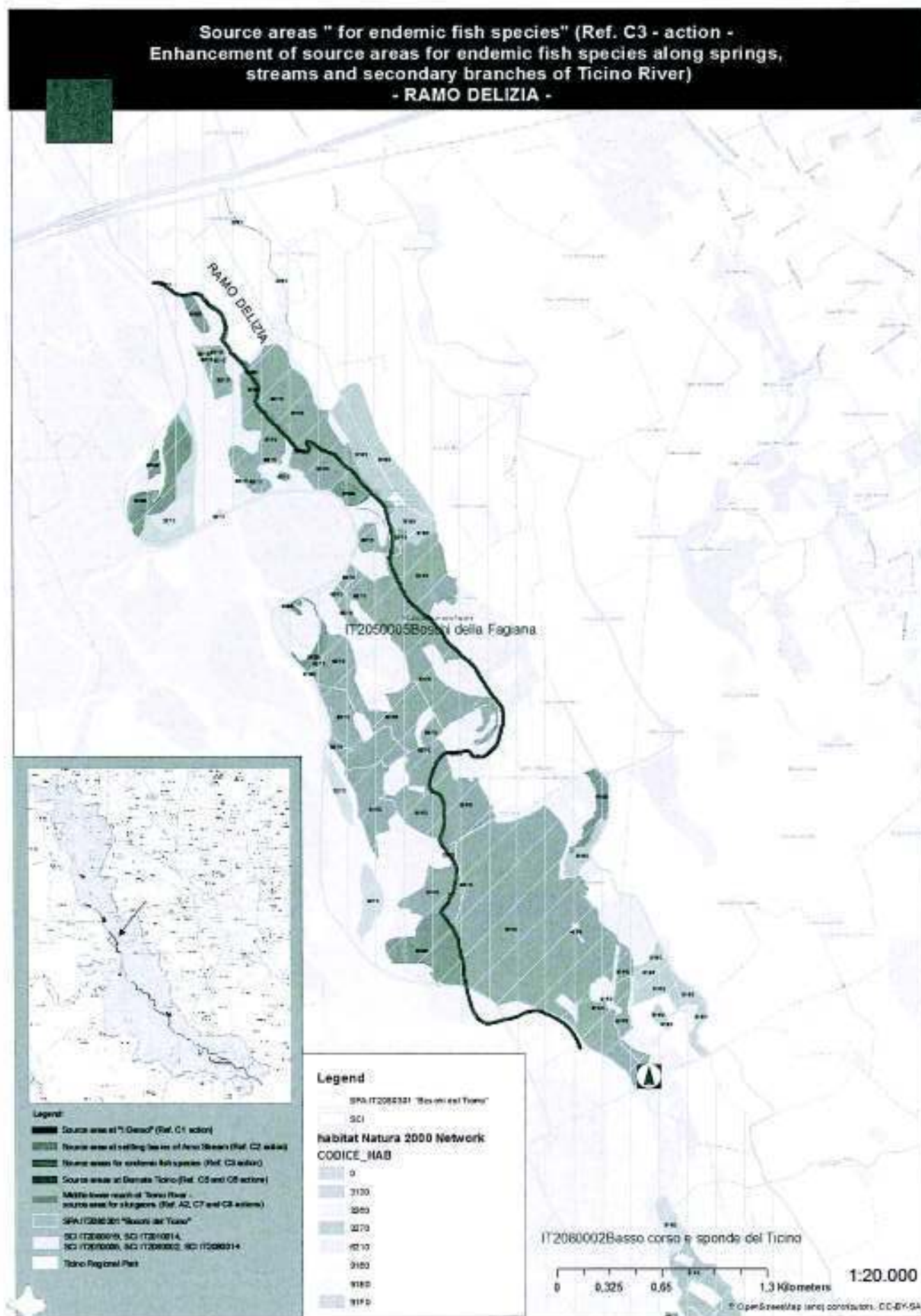


Name of the picture: Source area "Arno Stream settling basins"

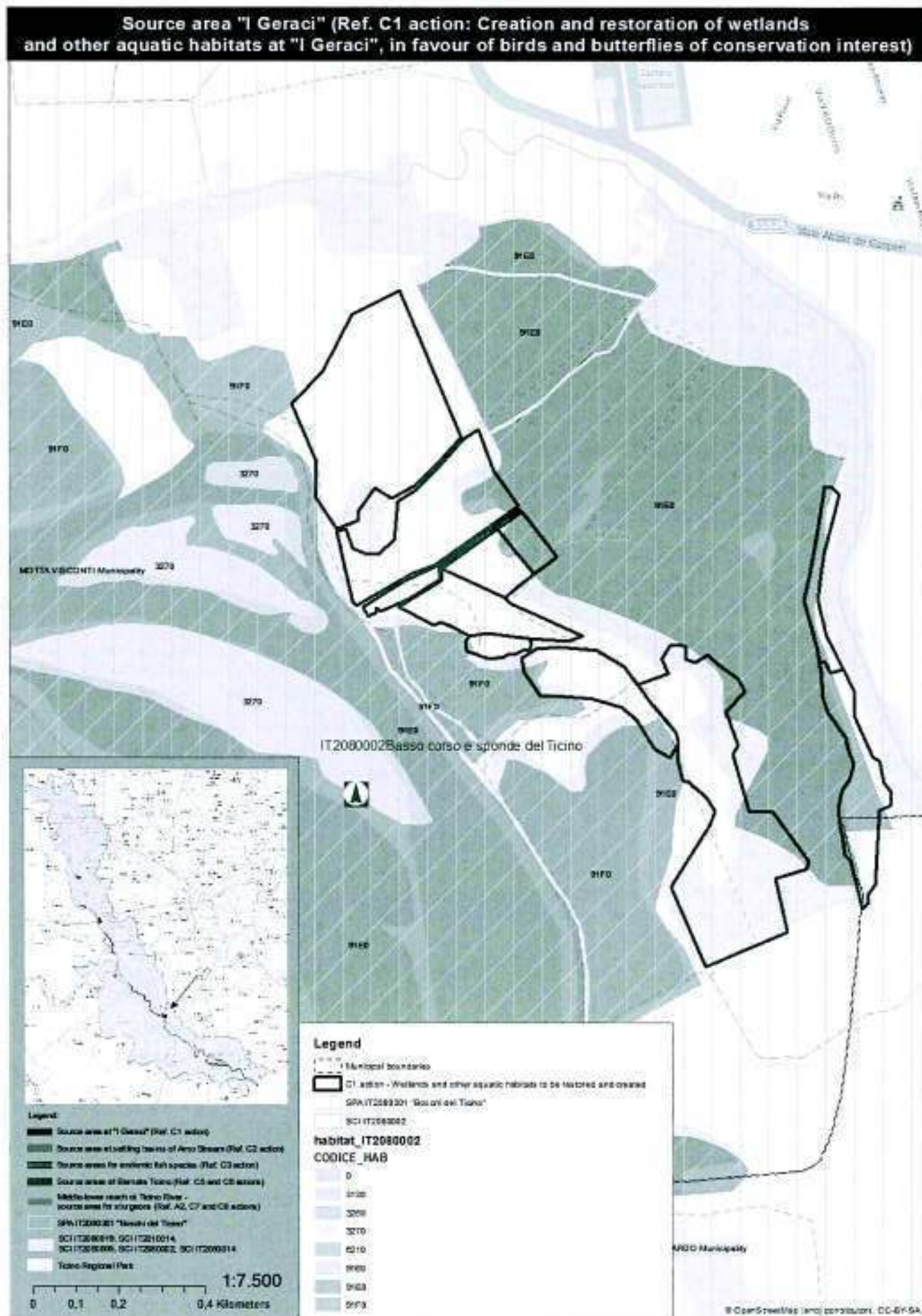
Source area "Arno Stream settling basins" (Ref. C2 action - Ecological restoration of the settling basins of Arno Stream, as a source area for birds of conservation interest)



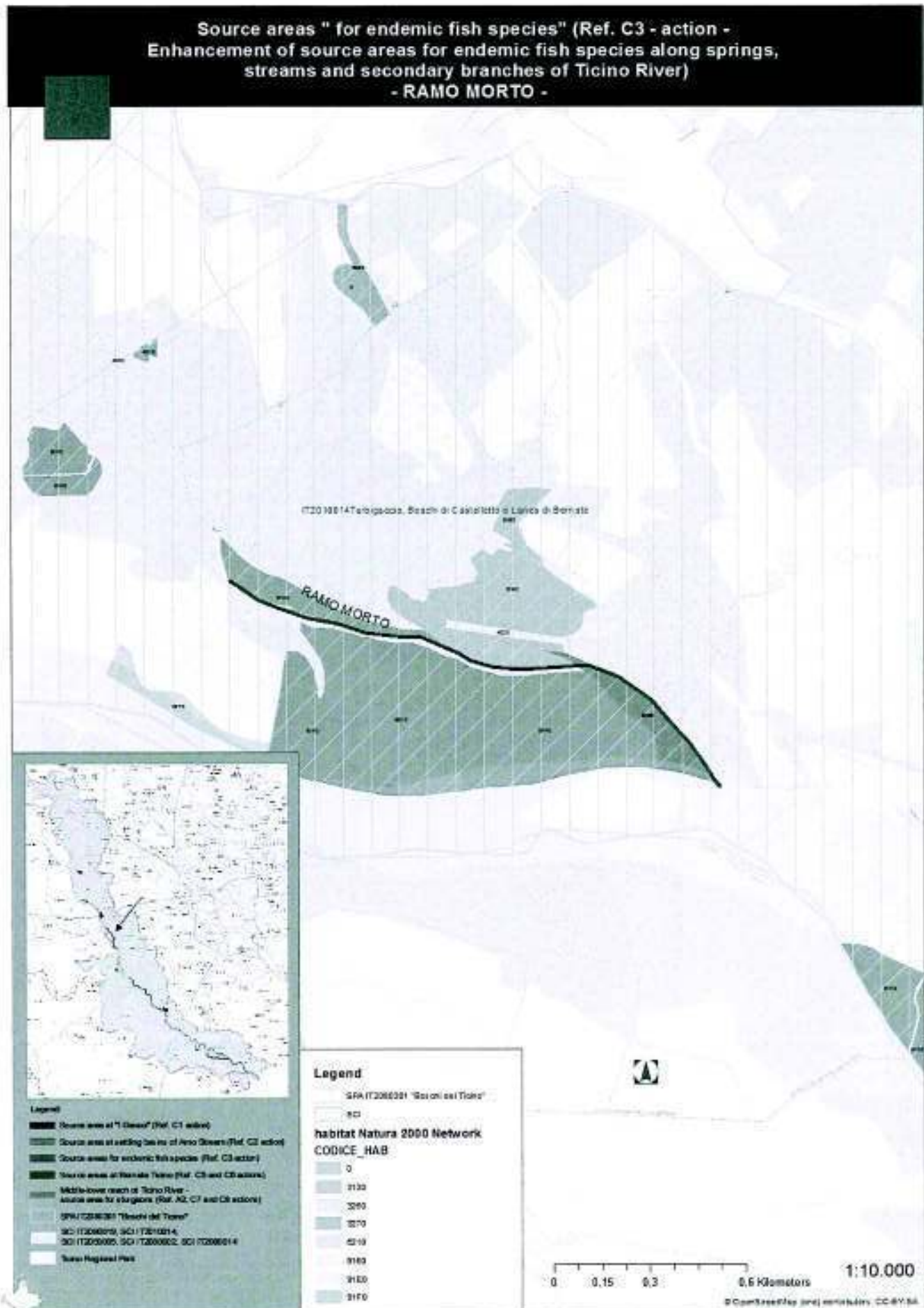
Name of the picture: Source areas "for endemic fish species" - RAMO DELIZIA



Name of the picture: Source area at "I Geraci"

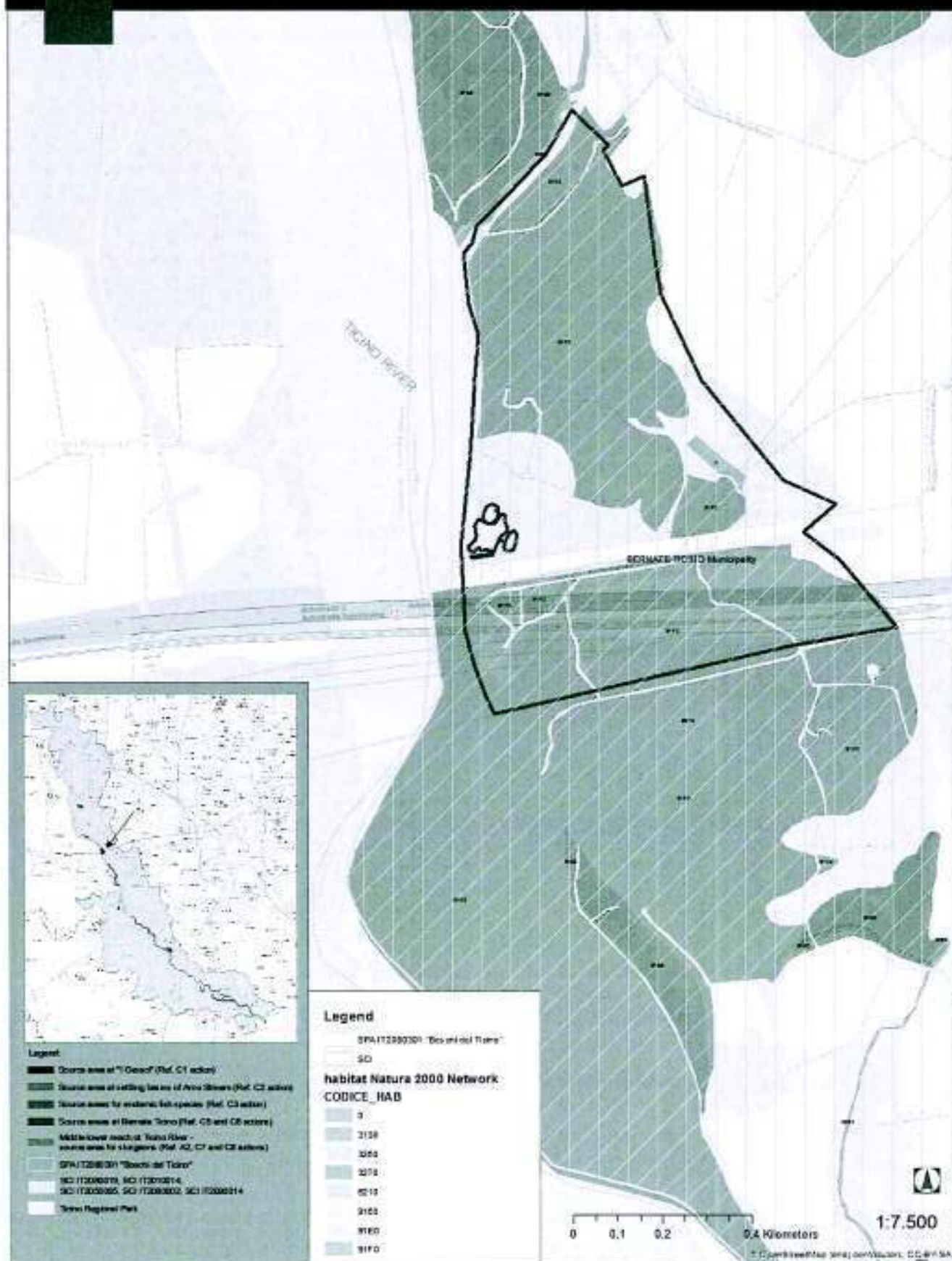


Name of the picture: Source areas "for endemic fish species" - RAMO MORTO

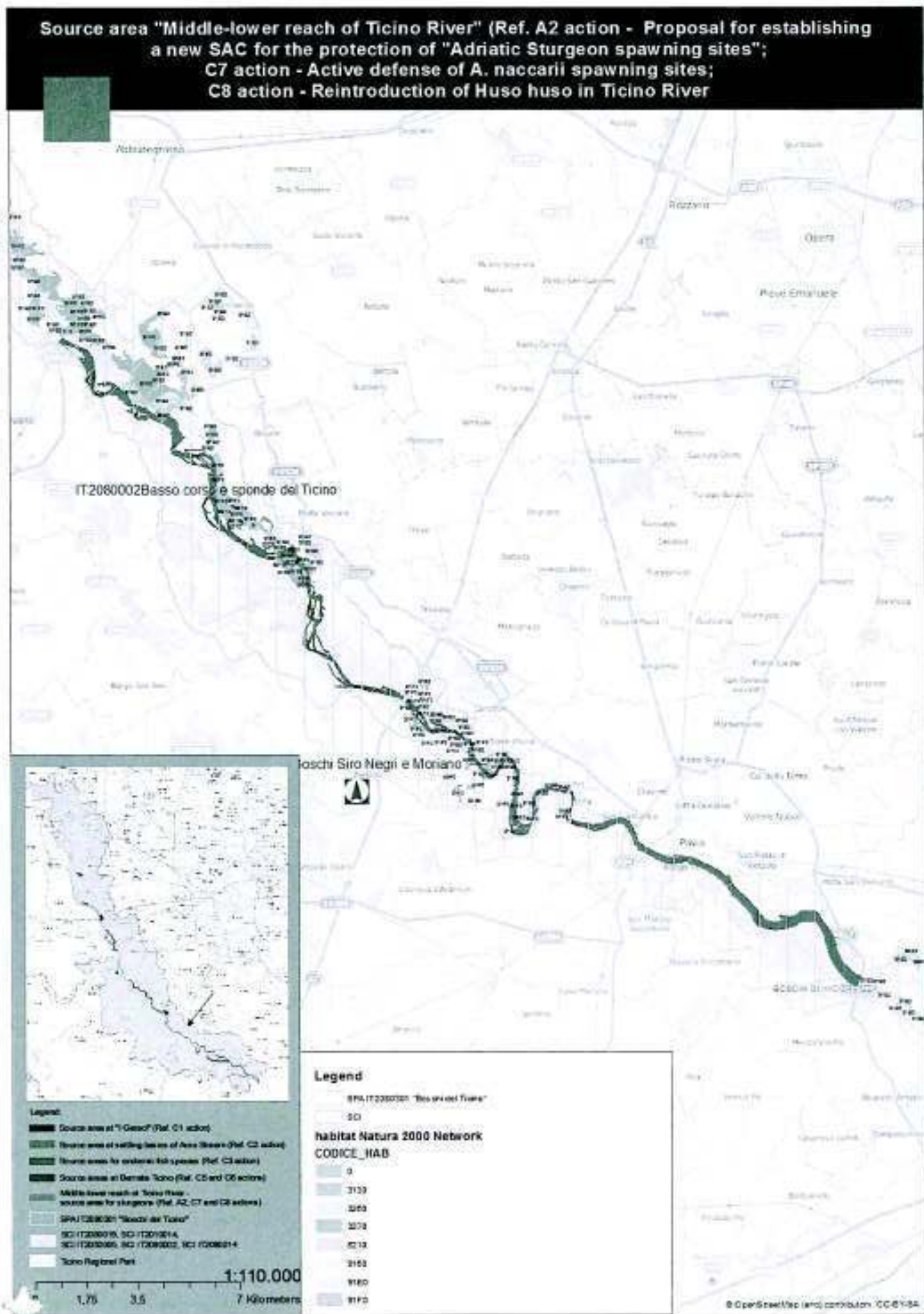


Name of the picture: Source area at BERNATE TICINO

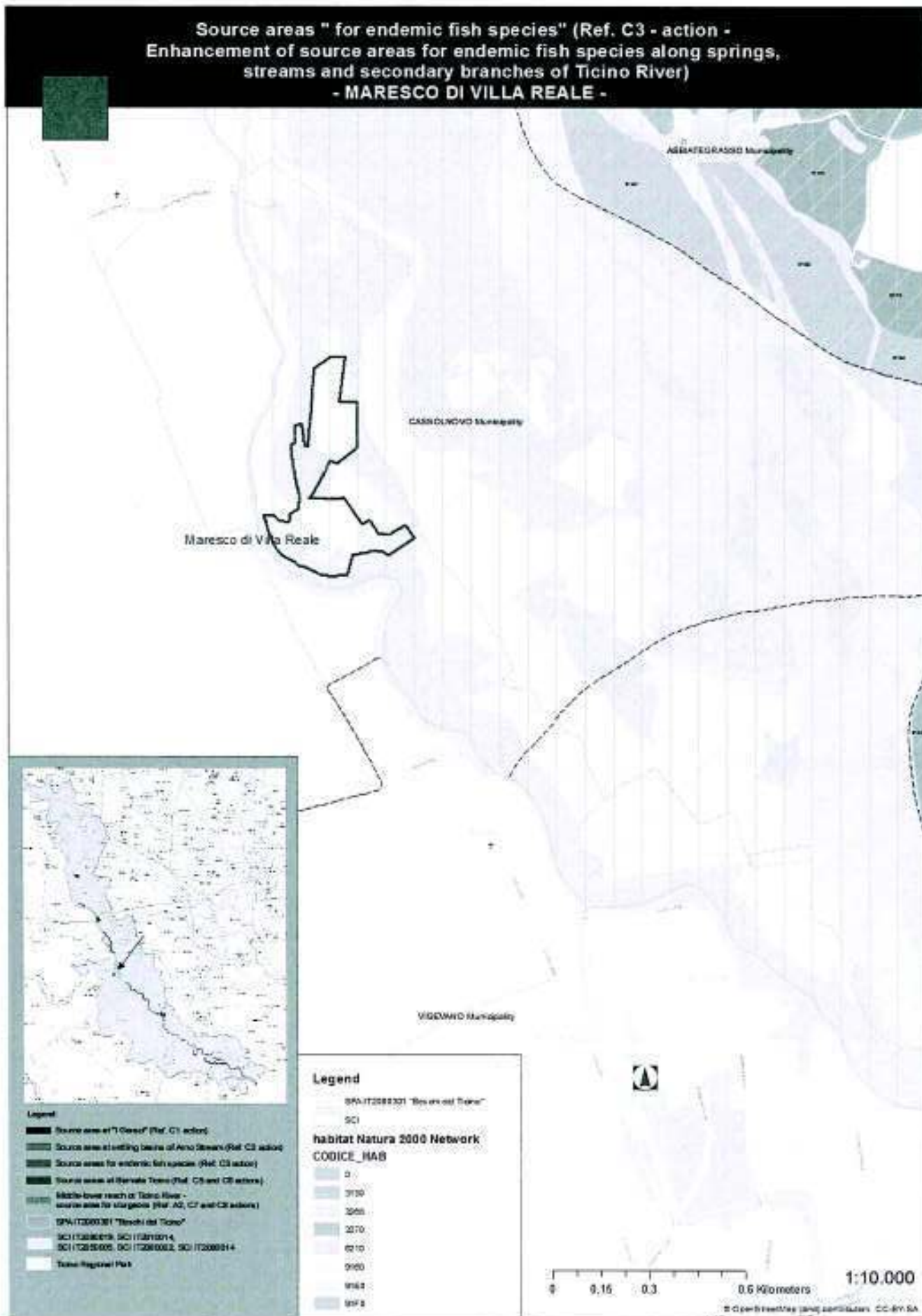
Source area at BERNATE TICINO (Ref. C5 action - Restoration and creation of forest habitats of conservation interest at Bernate Ticino; C6 action - Restoration of wetlands at Bernate Ticino)



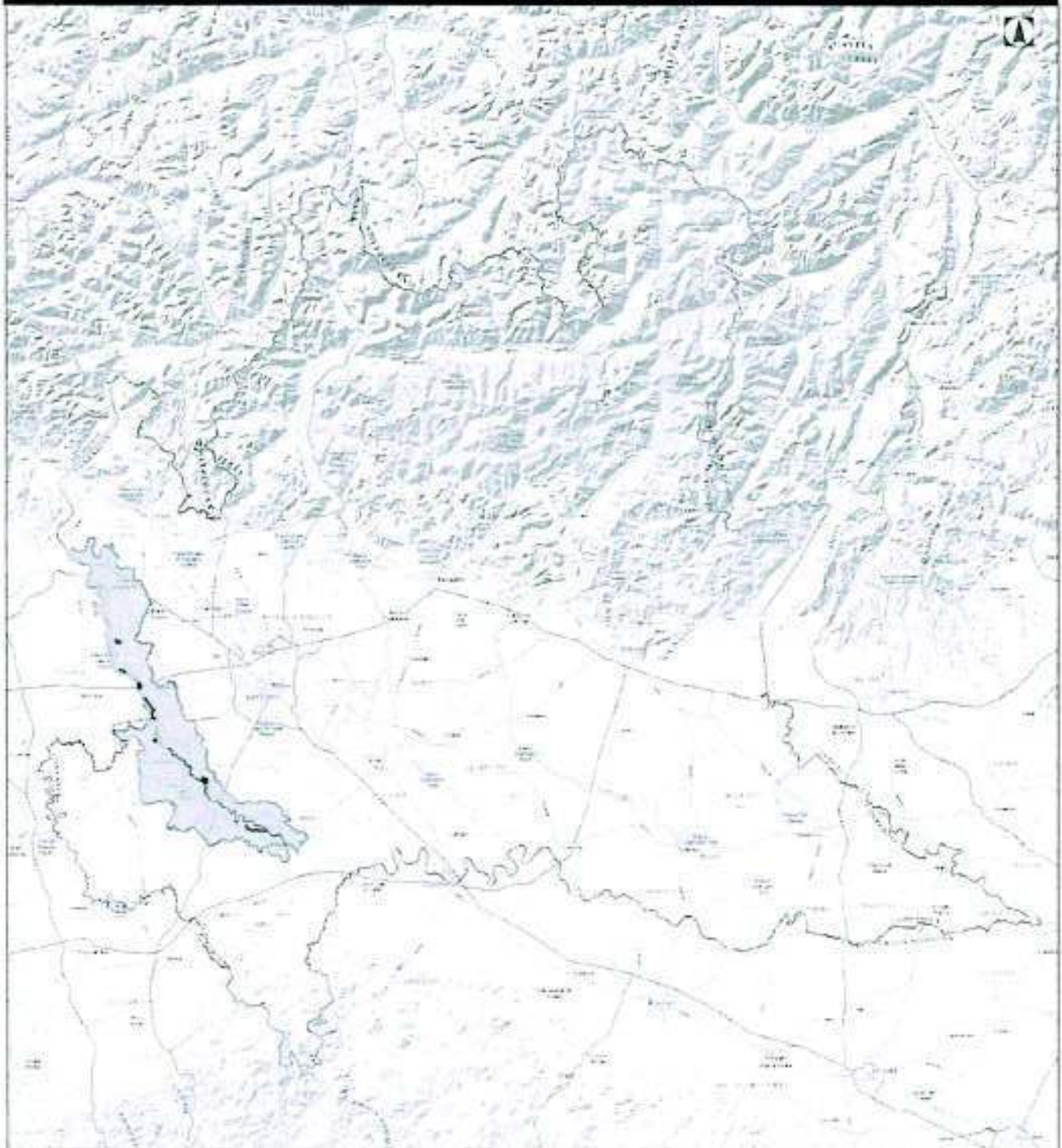
Name of the picture: Source area "Middle-lower reach of Ticino River"












Name of the picture: Source areas "for endemic fish species" - MARESCO DI VILLA REALE



Ticino Park source areas - Region location map



Legend:

- | | | | |
|---|--|--|--|
|  | Source area at "I Geraci" (Ref. C1 action) |  | SPA IT2080301 "Boschi del Ticino" |
|  | Source area at settling basins of Arno Stream (Ref. C2 action) |  | SCI IT2080019, SCI IT2010014,
SCI IT2050005, SCI IT2080002, SCI IT2080014 |
|  | Source areas for endemic fish species (Ref. C3 action) |  | Ticino Regional Park |
|  | Source areas at Bernate Ticino (Ref. C5 and C6 actions) |  | Lombardy Region |
|  | Middle-lower reach of Ticino River -
source area for sturgeons (Ref. A2, C7 and C8 actions) | | |

0 12.5 25 50 Kilometers 1:850.000

Source: Esri, DeLorme, NAVTEQ, TerraStar, International Business Machines Corporation, GEBCO, USGS, FRA, NPS, MRCAN, GeoEye, IGN, Wikidata, NLS, DigitalGlobe, Swire, Earthstar, GEBCO, CNES, Airbus (Hong Kong), Swire, and the GIS User Community

DESCRIPTION OF SPECIES / HABITATS / BIODIVERSITY ISSUES TARGETED BY THE PROJECT

The target of the project will be species and habitats of community interest and species of conservation interest at continental scale (European Red List of Birds and/or Species of European conservation Interest).

Two species and one habitat are priority ones according to the BD and HD: *Acipenser naccarii**, *Aythya nyroca**, Wet woodlands of *Alnus glutinosa* 91E0*.

In the Annex I to the proposal will be given a description of each target species, including the conservation status, distribution and threats in the Park and the critical role of the Park for their conservation.

Target species

Aythya nyroca (Ann. I* BD). The species is present especially in South-Eastern Europe and is classified SPEC 1 (BirdLife International). The Italian breeding population is of about 70-100 pairs and has a "bad" status of conservation. Breeding population in the Park is of 2-5 pairs (Casale 2015).

Ixobrychus minutus (Ann. I BD). The species is present in Europe and western Asia and has in Italy a "bad" status of conservation. The Park hosts 50-100 breeding pairs (Casale 2015).

Nycticorax nycticorax (Ann. I BD). The species is present in Europe, Asia and Africa. It is a migratory species, wintering in Africa. Most of the Italian (and European) breeding population is located in the Padana Plain. The Park hosts 200-1500 pairs (Casale 2015). The species is classified SPEC3 and has in Italy a "bad" conservation status.

Casmerodius albus (Ann. I BD). It breeds in Europe and temperate Asia. In Italy breed some tens of pairs and has an "inadequate" status of conservation. The Park hosts 36,7% of the wintering population of Lombardy (Casale et al. 2014).

Egretta garzetta (Ann. I BD). In Italy the species is breeding, migratory and partially wintering. 405 of the breeding pairs are located in Lombardy and Piedmont. Recent studies shows a decrease of the breeding population in Padana Plain and in the Park, that hosts 500-1000 pairs. The Italian breeding population is about one third of the EU population. The Park hosts 44% of the wintering population in Lombardy (Casale et al. 2014) and in post-breeding season has hosted more than 15 of the Italian population (Casale 2015).

Himantopus himantopus (Ann. I BD). It breeds in Eurasia and Africa. Migratory species, it overwinter in Africa. The Italian population is of about 3.000-4.000 pairs. In the Park breed 50-100 pairs, more than 155 of the Italian population (Casale 2015).

Circus cyaneus (Ann. I BD). The species is classified SPEC 3. In the Park overwinter 20-50 individuals (Casale 2015).

Alcedo atthis (Ann. I BD). It has in Italy a "bad" status of conservation and is listed in the European Red List of Birds. The Park hosts 50-70 breeding pairs (Casale 2015).

Lycaena dispar (Ann. II e IV DH). Declining species due to the disappearing and degradation of suitable habitats (lowland wet grasslands). In Italy is present in the North, with a significant population in the flat grasslands of the Padana Plain (Bogliani et al. 2007). In the Park its presence has been recently recorded in suitable relict habitats (wet lowland grasslands) of the northern, central and southern sectors of the protected area, with more than 30 individuals observed in 2015 (D. Sala & A.

Pellegrino, *com.pers.*).

*Acipenser naccarii** (Ann. II* e IV DH). The species is endemic of the Adriatic sea. Native species of the Po river and its tributaries. The wild population in Italy is considered "critically endangered (probably extinct)" (IUCN 2014).

Huso huso (extinct in the field before the HD). The species is ordinary of the Black Sea, Danube, Caspio Sea, Ural river and Adriatic Sea: it is present in Azov sea and Volga river. The species is classified as "extinct" in Italy (IUCN 2014) .

Cobitis bilineata (Ann. II DH). It is a sub-endemic species of Northern Italy and is present in small areas of Slovenia and Croatia; it has been introduced in other part of Italy and in France, Switzerland and Spain. The populations are depleting due to the competition with alloctonous species, and is classified at "LR" of extinction (IUCN 2014).

Letentheron zanandreae (Ann. II e V DH). Species endemic of Northern Italy, but ordinary also present in Bosnia Erzegovina, Croatia and Slovenia. In Italy is present in the left tributaries of the Po river, in the rivers of Veneto and Friuli - Venezia Giulia and the rivers Esino and Potenza, especially in spring habitats. The species is classified "LR" (IUCN, 2014) and as "vulnerable" by the Italian IUCN Committee.

Cottus gobio (Ann. II DH). The species has a European distribution; in Italy, even though declining, is distributed along the Alps, the Apennine till Tevere river. The species is classified "LR" (IUCN 2014).

Rana dalmatina (Ann IV DH). Species largely diffused in Europe. The global trend is declining, and it is classified "LR" by IUCN and by the IUCN Italian Committee.

Rana latastei (Ann II and IV DH). Italian sub-endemism, known for Padana Plain, Canton Ticino and Istria. The species is considered "VU" by IUCN (2014).

Hyla arborea (Ann IV DH). Italian sub-endemism, also present in Slovenia and Canton Ticino. It is classified "LR" by IUCN and IUCN Italian Committee.

Target habitats

3150 Natural eutrophic lakes with Magnopotamion or Hydrocharition.

It is a habitat scarcely represented in the Ticino Park.

4030 European Dry Heaths

Habitat that is sparsely distributed along the Ticino valley, with the major concentrations of *Calluna vulgaris* heathlands in the proposed SCI/SPA "Brughiere di Malpensa and Lonate Pozzolo".

6510 Lowland hay grasslands (*Alopecurus pratensis*, *Sanguisorba officinalis*).

Grasslands that are still well represented along the Ticino valley, especially when they are traditionally managed. It is often recorded the indicator species *Sanguisorba officinalis* (R. Castrovinci, *com. pers.*), a species that is rare in Padana Plain, and other species of conservation interest like *Colchicum autumnale* and *Iris sibirica*.

91E0* Alluvial forests of *Alnus glutinosa*

Woodlands often related to water courses and lakes. Mainly composed by *Alnus glutinosa*, *Salix alba*, *Populus nigra*, *Populus alba*. The central and southern sectors

the Park has the largest and well preserved examples of this habitat in Northern Italy.

91F0 Riparian mixed forests of *Quercus robur*, *Ulmus laevis* and *Ulmus minor*, *Fraxinus excelsior* or *Fraxinus angustifolia*, along the great rivers (*Ulmenion minoris*)

Woodlands that are mainly related to rivers dominated by oaks, elms, elders, cherises. It is well distributed along the Ticino valley.

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Web sites list

<http://www.iucnredlist.org/>

<http://www.iucn.it/>



CONSERVATION / BIODIVERSITY PROBLEMS AND THREATS & PREVIOUS CONSERVATION EFFORTS

Provide this information for those species / habitat types or biodiversity issue directly targeted by the project

The Annex 1 attached to the proposal includes deepening descriptive cards for each target species, information on the conservation status, causes of threat in their distribution area and in Ticino Park, crucial role of this area in Ticino Park with conservation objective.

Main threats to target species are the following ones:

Aythya nyroca (Ann. I* BD)

Main threats for the species are (taken by the National Action Plan for the conservation of Ferruginous Duck; Melega, 2003):

- lost/degradation of the habitats;
- disturbance;
- poaching;
- loss of knowledge about the biology of the species.

Main objectives of the National Action Plan are:

- to furnish adequate management instruments for the sites that are regularly frequented by the species;
- to increase and improve suitable habitats;
- to increase the network of suitable sites;
- to monitor the breeding population;
- to monitor the productivity of breeding populations;
- to increase the public awareness about the importance of the conservation of this species.

Ixobrychus minutus (Ann I BD)

It is threatened by the depletion of reedbeds, due to drainage, destruction of riparian vegetation. The maintenance of wet vegetation (in particular reedbeds) at the borders of water bodies is the most important measure for the conservation of the species.

Casmerodius albus (Ann. I BD) e *Egretta garzetta* (Ann I BD)

The destruction of wetlands and the degradation of ricefields represent the major threats for these species. In the last years, a important threat is represented by the recent technique of "dry" cultivation of rice, that create unsuitable habitats for foraging.

Lullula arborea (Ann I BD)

The abandonment or change in cultivations in agricultural farmlands represents the

main threat to the species, both during breeding season and during migration and wintering. The maintaining of extensive agricultural mosaics represents the main measure for the conservation of the species.

Alcedo atthis (Ann I BD)

The species populations are influenced by very cold winters and by changes in suitable habitat. The preservation of water course and wetlands represents the best way to protect the species, but the modifications of many water courses represents a critical aspect for the Kingfisher.

Lycaena dispar (Ann II HD)

The main threat for the species is the disappearing and draining of suitable habitats, wet lowland grasslands (Biasioli et al. 2011).

Acipenser naccarii (Ann II* and IV HD).

The species suffer from the fragmentation inside its home range but before 2017 will be realized the fish passage that will de-fragment the dam of Isola Serafini, that presently block the Po river (Life ConFluPo). Another critical aspect is the presence of exotic species, that create disturbance, competition and predation on young individuals. Another threat is poaching.

Huso huso (Ann. V HD - extinct before the HD entered into force).

The species suffers the fragmentation of its natural home range everywhere in the original distribution area: in Italy it became extinct probably just following the construction of Isola Serafini dam, in the Po River, and due to the overexploitation of fishing. By 2017 the definitive defragmentation of the Po river at Isola Serafini dam, crucial for the conservation of this migratory species and all the native migratory and not migratory fishfauna, within the ConFluPo Life Project (Life11nat/it/188) will completely reopen the way from and towards the sea and Ticino River. Intensive fishing, water withdrawals and pollution are additional threats to the detriment of the species.

Cobitis bilineata (Ann. II HD).

Populations are in decline due to competition exerted by other alien species on loach. Also significant alterations of habitats such as pollution, artificial state of the banks and change course.

Letentheron zanandreae (Ann. II and V DH).

The species is threatened especially by the water that is used for agricultural activities and that drain springs, the main habitat of the species.

Cottus gobio (Ann. II HD).

Main threats for the species are represented by introduction of alloctonous species and degradation of water habitats (pollution, artificial banks, water fluctuations).

Rana dalmatina (Ann IV DH) and *Rana latastei* (Ann II e IV DH)

Main threats are the modification/disappearing of breeding sites due to pollution, drainage, water-withdrawal and to the modification of refuge and foraging habitats due to the reduction and degradation of lowland forests.

Hyla arborea (All. IV DH).

Main threats are the reduction / degradation of open woodlands, heathlands and ecotonal habitats (like forest clearings).

Main threats for target habitats are the following ones:

3150 Natural eutrophic lakes with Magnopotamion or Hydrocharition.

The habitat is scarcely represented inside Ticino Park, that needs largest surfaces for giving host to breeding, migratory and wintering waterbirds, many of which are of conservation interest. Migratory birds, in particular, follow the important flyway Ticino river - Verbano lake for crossing the Alps and have not many suitable stop-over sites during their migration.

4030 European Dry Heaths

Main threat in the Park is represented by the invasion of alloctonous plants, especially *Prunus serotina*.

6510 Lowland hay meadows (*Alopecurus pratensis*, *Sanguisorba officinalis*).

The habitat is still well represented in the Park, but in many cases the status of conservation is low because they area not any more managed according to traditional methods, more favourable for creating habitat useful for biodiversity.

91E0* Alluvial forests of *Alnus glutinosa*

The competition with agriculture (especially poplar plantations) and the control of water levels have a strong negative impact on this habitat.

91F0 Riparian mixed forests of *Quercus robur*, *Ulmus laevis* and *Ulmus minor*, *Fraxinus excelsior* or *Fraxinus angustifolia*, along the great rivers (*Ulmion minoris*)

The habitat is threatened by the control of water levels and the invasion of alloctonous species.

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PREVIOUS CONSERVATION EFFORTS IN THE PROJECT AREA AND/OR FOR THE HABITATS / SPECIES TARGETED BY THE PROJECT

Egretta garzetta and *Nycticorax nycticorax*. The Park executed many interventions for the conservation of heronries, especially for their preservation and their restoration, especially for avoiding poaching, illegal wood cuts and vandalism.

Acipenser naccarii. In 2003 was financed the project LIFE 03NAT/IT/000113 "Conservazione di *Acipenser naccarii* nel Fiume Ticino e nel medio corso del Fiume Po", that had as objective the reduction of threats along Ticino river and a trait of Po river. In particular, during this project were eliminated thousands of *Silurus glanis*, since a previous study showed the strong impact of this invasive species on the autoctonous fishes in the central and southern sectors of Ticino and of Po river.

This impact is determined by a strong foraging competition and for the habitat, but also for the predation towards young individuals of sturgeon.

The same Life project brought to a specific Action Plan for the conservation of *Acipenser naccarii*.

During the same Life project started interventions that were completed in 2010 that brought to the defragmentation of the Ticino river with the involvement of Regione Lombardia, Regione Piemonte, Provincia di Novara, Provincia di Varese, Parco Valle del Ticino Piemontese and Comune di Somma Lombardo, apart from Parco Lombardo della Valle del Ticino. This process brought to the project LIFE11NAT/IT/188 presently on the way, that involves the deframmentation of the dam of Isola Serafini on the Po river.

In the meanwhile, the Park started to raise sturgeons artificially, to be released in nature.

A.naccarii was than the object of a recently finished project founded by Fondazione Cariplo "Interventi per la conservazione dello Storione cobice (*Acipenser naccarii*) nel Fiume Ticino" that permitted to GRAIA to confirm the spawning of the species in Ticino river, in Pavia area.

BEST PRACTICE CHARACTER OF THE PROJECT

The character of best practices is present in different aspects of the project, in particular:

1. Action A2 - It has a character of best practice since it implements what defined by the HD, Annex III "Criteria of selection of sites that are suitable for being identified as SCI and designated as SAC", since it is coherent with points B.c and B.d that regards: the first the isolation of the population of the site with respect to the natural distribution of the species, since the species is apparently extinct everywhere apart from this sector of Ticino river; the second is the global evaluation of the value of the site for the conservation of the species, since it is the only known place where *A. naccarii* is present with a population that could breed naturally and so its importance is absolute for the conservation of the species. Without *A. naccarii* in Ticino river it would be extinct the last wild population of native Italian sturgeons.
2. Actions A3 and C4 - All the actions that foresee the involvement of farmers has an approach of sharing the management and the conservation objectives; furthermore, increasing of the awareness due to this activities will have benefits for the future conservation of agricultural biodiversity.
3. Actions A4, C1, C2 and C3 - They all implement best practices, as it is shown by the annexed feasibility studies, since for the interventions will be used techniques of environmental engineering and river rehabilitation.
4. All the project, and in particular the conservation Actions (apart from the one related to *Huso huso*) are classified as best practices since they adopt strategies for the improvement of suitable habitats for species of conservation interest, the so called "source areas".
5. Action C7 is a best practice, since it includes the strong protection of *A. naccarii*, as defined by HD. Furthermore, it implements the control of invasive alloctonous fish species on the base of local experience, that will permit not to waste energies and instruments.

DEMONSTRATION CHARACTER OF THE PROJECT

The demonstration character is present in different aspects of the project:

1. Action A5 and C7 - The creation of a local task force that includes mainly local angler for the protection of spawning areas of sturgeons presents a highly demonstrative character, since it is the first such a case along Ticino River and involves a charismatic species. It could represent a good example to be done in other sites;
2. Action C2 - The installation of rafts for creating suitable breeding habitats for waterbirds is a practice that is new for the Ticino River area and in general for Padana Plain, and could represent a good example to be done in other sites;
3. Action C5 - The restoration of natural habitats (forests and wetlands) in a degraded area previously characterized by the presence of buildings in a natural area represents a very good demonstration of an activity that could be replicated in other similar contexts.

PILOT ASPECTS OF THE PROJECT

The pilot aspect of the project is especially linked to Action C8, for its character of uniqueness, since it will be the first time that *H. huso* will be raised for the reintroduction of the species, today disappeared in Italy and critically endangered all over the wider distribution original area.

The return of the species is possible, since the environmental context is suitable for hosting it, as it is shown by the annexed feasibility study. It is also necessary to prepare the cultural context through activities of information for increasing the public awareness. During the project the Park and the project team aim to evaluate if the techniques and methods for breeding the *Huso* in the philosophy of the "fitness for survival" work or not. The monitoring, evaluation and active dissemination of the main project results is an integral part of the project; the monitoring of the reintroduction in the Ticino river aims to assess the effectiveness of the method.

In the context of the dissemination actions, it is foreseen to inform other stakeholders of the results and to encourage them where appropriate to use the techniques and methods successfully tested in

the project. The project has also the purpose to replicate and transfer results during and after the project implementation to larger scale contexts. The whole distribution area of the *Huso huso* includes the Black and Mediterranean Sea and the Caspian Sea. The pilot experience in the Ticino river, and the networking activity, will allow to implement the results to a very larger scale context, and may promote new partnerships towards the common objective of the restoration of this important species. The Ticino river is a very small area, if compared to the Black and Mediterranean Sea basin, but it could be a kind of "laboratory" form where to start a wider reintroduction project of the *Huso huso*.

EU ADDED VALUE OF THE PROJECT AND ITS ACTIONS

The project will have a high added value for the European Union because it implements many priority objectives of the European Strategy for Biodiversity till 2020 (COM (2011) 244):

- Objective 1 "To conserve and restore the natural habitat": in particular referring to faunistic species of community interest, including the priority species *Acipenser naccarii**, for whom will be designated a new SAC (Action A2). For numerous other target species of birds, fishes and butterflies will be realized interventions for restoring or creating suitable habitats of strategic importance (Actions C1, C2 and C3), including the priority species *Aythya nyroca**, for whom will be created new habitats (Action C2);
- Objective 2 "To preserve and value ecosystems and their services": the project contributes to the restoration of degraded ecosystems, in particular with Actions C1, C2 and C3. Between this action, C1 in particular will obtain the final result of having a mosaic of natural and semi-natural habitats of great importance for biodiversity and environmental education;
- Objective 3 "To grant the sustainability of agriculture and forestry": Action C4 is especially focused on implementing traditional management of lowland wet meadows in favour of wildlife;
- Objective 5 "To challenge exotic invasive species": Action C7 is focused on the control of *Silurus glanis*, for avoiding its interference with *A. naccarii** in the only known spawning site of the species, during the delicate breeding phase;
- Objective 6 "To manage the crisis of biodiversity at global level": this is satisfied by Actions related to the following species:
 - o *Acipenser naccarii**, priority species for the HD, probably extinct in the wild according to IUCN, that also says that probably there is a natural population in Ticino river that could breed. Our data shows that this population exists, unique in the world, and it is in the Ticino river;
 - o *Huso huso*, a species that is disappeared in Italy since more than 30 years. The project aim to raise and reintroduce the species;
 - o *Aythya nyroca**, priority species, also classified SPEC1 (Globally Threatened Species) by BirdLife International, it is present in the Park with a group of breeding pairs that is one of the most significant at National level. Action C2 will support this population, giving a support to a species of very high conservation value;
 - o *Lycaena dispar*: the Park hosts one of the most significant population of these species and the interventions (especially C4) will help to maintain, restore and increase its suitable habitats;
 - o Many target fish species are Italian endemics or sub-endemics (*Lethenteron zanandreae*, *Cobitis taenia*, *Cottus gobio*) and the Park is a strategic site for their global conservation, since it represents the best preserved large area in the Padana Plain.

The centrality of project area for the conservation of target species is high and reaches its highest level for *A. naccarii*. The creation of a SAC focused on the protection of this population is a critical measure for assuring to the species the strong protection that needs.

Furthermore, the project will care about sustainable development, in particular with respect to traditional farming activities that contributes to wildlife conservation.

The project is synergic with the UE environmental politics with regards to the restoration of water habitats and with WFD 2000/60/CE, since it will improve the status of conservation of native fish species, that are one of the indicators considered by the Directive for evaluating the ecological status

of these ecosystems.

The Actions of the project could be replicated, as best practices and pilot actions, elsewhere in other areas of presence of target species with environmental conditions similar to the one of the Park, also in consideration of the synergy that will be adopted between faunistic and agricultural activities.

The project will adopt a Green Procurement approach to all of purchases of goods or services. Public Procurements specifically concern Ticino Park. At the time of procurement, it will be able to require all contracting firms elements ensuring conformity of goods and services subject to contract to certain environmental criteria, referring in particular to art. 43 of the new Directive on GPP - Directive 2014/24 / EU of 26 February 2014. Under the new Directive the firms will be required to show evidences about the environmental and sustainability criteria that they satisfy, to make sure that the works, supplies or services provided are as eco-friendly as possible: ecolabels, reports, certifications and other means of proof (for instance, the technical documentation of the manufacturer) will be accepted.

The main strategy elements will be:

- 1. At the beginning of the project, a specification concerning Green Procurement will be defined by the partners. This specification will be included in all the procurements foreseen in the project, by all the partners. Specifications on Project Green Procurement have been included among project deliverables.***
- 2. A specific report concerning Green Procurement will be draft during the periodical project reporting at the deadlines specified in Form C2. The Project Green Procurement Policy reports have been included among the project deliverables.***
- 3. The Project Manager will coordinate the partners ensuring their application of the Green Procurement specifications.***

SOCIO-ECONOMIC AND ECOSYSTEM SERVICES EFFECTS OF THE PROJECT

The socio - economic effects of the project will be mainly related to the execution of Actions C and E, in particular:

1. Action C1 will create a mosaic of natural habitats and establish bird-watching facilities at "I Geraci", where is already present a Visitor Centre of the Park, in this way creating a strategic point for offering activities to citizens, schools and birdwatchers. For this reasons we expect an increasing of visitors at "I Geraci" before the end of the project;
2. Action C4 will implement traditional farming activities that are disappearing and that create favourable habitats for species of conservation interest. The final results will be postivie also under a social, landscape and cultural point of view.

Particular importance from a socio-economic point of view is given to the reforestation of Bernate, where the previous human impact had created a fragmentation of the Ticino Park corridor. The action, that follows a very important activity of re-acquisition of land and properties to the public use, has a wide impact. People who occupied houses, gardens and artificial lakes have been convinced to sell the properties and to go away, allowing to destroy the buildings and the fences. All these costs had been sustained from the Highway and the Railway companies, in the developping of a new wider bridge that shouldn't narrow the river, but should allow it to freely flow and meander, re-occupying the ancient and forcibly abandoned beds. The process of re-naturalization of this area will be completed with Actions C5 and C6, creating new habitat in place of gardens, both terrestrial and aquatic, giving to the whole fauna, including of course the species of special concern, to have new habitat and connection between the lower and the upper Ticino river corridor.

All the new ecosystems, created at Motta Visconti (I Geraci), at Bernate Ticino, at the Arno ponds, and along the lateral watercourses will produce new ecosystem services, with positive socio-economic effects on the area of the Ticino River Park and for the whole human community living in this area.

Further socio-economic effects will be produced by the Huso huso reintroduction. A species of a so high faunistic and historical value, will have direct and indirect effects. It will move local economies, for the fish supply and breeding, for the monitoring, for the traning of many people and for the schools. The students will have new didactic kit during the field trips in the Ticino park, focusing on the Huso, and

starting from the Huso reintroduction to describe the story and the purposes of the Park, of the River, of the Habitat Directive, of IUCN and of the Natura 2000 net with the Life projects.

This first attempt to reintroduce Huso will probably allow to get involved many other institutions, Public bodies, Universities, farmers. They all will have a first experience trial on this species and will probably attempt to promote other projects on this topic, research, and a strong networking that could refer to a very important area including the Black and Mediterranean Sea and the Caspian Sea, that is the whole distribution area of the Huso.

EFFORTS FOR REDUCING THE PROJECT'S "CARBON FOOTPRINT"

The most important contribution to the reduction of carbon footprint will derive from interventions of new forest plantations.

The procurement activities done by each partner will follow a "green" approach. In particular, the public bodies will follow as strictly as possible the guidelines on Green Public Procurement developed at European and National level such as the COM397/2008 and COM400/2008 and the D.Lgs 163/2006. For instance, the organization of the events will follow guidelines for sustainability: the food will be as much as possible from local producers, organic-fair trade food products will be used as well.

All the partners are involved already in the commitment to reduce as much as possible CO2 emissions. For instance the Ticino Park uses recycled paper (eco-paper) for its documents, gadgets are usually realized by organic material and/or fair trades materials (certified).

During the project implementation the use of paper for instance will be reduced at a very low level, favouring electronic documents also for the dissemination of activities to the different stakeholders.

Although the distance among the partner's headquarters is below 50 km, trips for meetings among partners will be reduced as much as possible and online (skype etc...) conferences will be preferred. The same will be applied to meetings with stakeholders, if possible.

The project documents will be preferably in electronic form in order to reduce the use of printers.

If air travel will be done for international events such as networking or conferences, attention will be addressed to prefer nonstop flights. For national trips, the train will be preferred.



STAKEHOLDERS INVOLVED AND TARGET AUDIENCE OF THE PROJECT

Principal stakeholders and target audience of the project are:

- farmers involved in Action C4;
- anglers involved in many actions for the preservation of sturgeons;
- volunteers involved in many actions for the preservation of sturgeons;
- visitors at "I Geraci", at Bernate Ticino and at Arno basins;
- schools that will participate to the didactic programme;
- researchers, administrators and all the people involved in the many environmental topics of the project: wetland rehabilitation and creation, reforestation of previous urbanized area, creation of new habitats, vitalization of artificial basin;
- researchers administrators and all the people involved in the many faunistic topics of the project: conservation of birds of special concern, sturgeons conservation and reintroduction, fish of EU interest, amphibians, butterflies;
- the teams of the networking Life projects who shared the contents of this project and who will participate to some particular actions and public events;
- the web users, who will be able worldwide to know the project and to follow its development and its results.



EXPECTED CONSTRAINTS AND RISKS RELATED TO THE PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION AND MITIGATION STRATEGY

With regards to possible constraints and risks related to the actions of the project, we underline the necessity of preliminary permits and authorizations, before their execution.

These actions are especially:

- Action A2. The designation of a new SAC will depend from a procedure during which Regione Lombardia will have to present the proposal to the EC through the Italian Ministry of the Environment. Due to the outstanding importance and uniqueness of the site, we trust that the designation will have positive answers from all the involved public bodies, as stated in the form AB from Regione Lombardia and from the Italian Ministry;

- Action A4, C1, C2 and C3. In this case we specify that:

a) the Park is owner of all the surfaces of the interventions for Actions C1 e C3;

b) the Park has already obtained from AIPO a written authorization (annexed to the proposal) for realizing the interventions of Action C2.

Another risky factor is represented by the actual participation of farmers, fishermen and other citizens to the Actions. In particular for actions A3 and C4 it is necessary the involvement of farmers for executing the Action C4. For these reasons we already asked to the farmers to sign the letters that are annexed to the proposal. Furthermore, the fact that the contacts with farmers will be taken by the Head of the Agriculture Office of the Park, who has been carrying on with success this role in the last 20 years is a sure advantage for the results of the action.

Some constraints are in the action of the *Huso huso* reintroduction, in particular for the particular ecology of the species. In fact, it is an anadromous fish, and probably the fish released in the Ticino river will have the stimulus to reach the sea (hopefully). As the released fish will probably be 1-3 years old, and as the sexual maturity is reached at 15-18 years old, our constraint is the long term monitoring of the reintroduction. During the project it will be possible to monitor the fish in the adaptation time in the farm seminatural raceways and in the Ticino river adaptation phase, but once the fish will be gone to the sea it will be very difficult to get any additional information. This is also due to the possibility to release a limited number of fish in relation to the huge dimension of the Po river basin and the Po delta area. The mitigation strategy for these constraints consists in the monitoring as best as possible of the fish during the time of the adaptation in the Ticino river, and to keep on stocking fish in the long period, for years and years, after the end of the project too, and to establish links and collaboration with any Public or Private body that will work on the *Huso* or on other sturgeon in this area. The radiotrigger that will be implanted in some dozens of them have a limited durability (3-4 years), and have the purpose to monitor the fish in the short period, but the PIT tags, will work all over the sturgeon life. So, as all the released sturgeons will be tagged with the PIT's, any sturgeon captured in the future years will be perfectly identifiable.

Concerning Action C8, it's foreseen that "Vinca" procedure, for at least the "screening" phase, will be required for the reintroduction in SCI TicinoPark, with the contribution of GRAIA, will redact and submit the Incidence Study to Lombardy Region (LR), as Competent Authority, which by 60 days have to issue its binding opinion. The possible risk in this procedure is really remote, thus to be considered as mitigated, because LR has already formally expressed its support to the project.

With regards to the costs of the interventions, they have been defined in the feasibility studies (annexed to the project proposal) for each intervention of the actions Cs, after a work of evaluation on site and in the office done by qualified technicians, with previous experience in these topics.

About action A1, it will be necessary from the very beginning of the project to identify the roles of each body and each person involved in the project, and to have for everybody a clear timetable

Apart from the Project manager, all the people that will be part of the coordination team of the project are already working for the beneficiaries.

The SC will involve, as well, the Head of all the Offices of the Park involved in the actions: Wildlife, Natura 2000, Forests, Agriculture, Landscape).

GRAIA and FLA will involve people with long experience in LIFE projects and to work together with Ticino Park, that will not have problems in respecting their roles.



CONTINUATION / VALORISATION AND LONG TERM SUSTAINABILITY OF THE PROJECT'S RESULTS AFTER THE END OF THE PROJECT

Which actions will have to be carried out or continued after the end of the project ?

The area "I Geraci" will continue to be a property of the Park after the Life project. The Park will carry on its management since it will become the most strategic place for presenting the biodiversity of the Park and its conservation to visitors, schools, birdwatchers, etc. The presence of a Park centre, visited yearly from thousands of students and people in general, who will find a lot of new specific conservation topics and interventions on aquatic habitats to visit, guarantees that this area will continue all the activities foreseen in the project.

Arno basins, after the end of the project, will continue to be owned by the State and managed by AIPO, in collaboration with the Park. The area is particularly important for the hydraulic management of the floods and its maintenance is an institutional duty of AIPO. So, the possibility to combine hydraulic purposes to biodiversity conservation and enhancement purposes will be continued after the end of the project.

The area of Bernate Ticino will continue to be owned and maintained by the Park.

The activities related to the conservation and the restocking of *A. naccarii** and *Huso huso* will be conducted as ordinary activities by the Park. This faunistic activity will continue for years, because the two species have very long life cycles and they reach the sexual maturity at 10-15 years old. So, as the experience on *A. naccarii* after unless 10 years of restocking activity is giving concrete results since the last 4-5 years with documented natural spawning activity, it will be necessary to continue also with *Huso huso* for years after the end of the project.

How will this be achieved? What resources will be necessary to carry out these actions?

These actions will be carried out through funds of the Park, integrated by funds of the regional government and of private sponsors, especially bank foundations.

Limited future costs must be considered for the maintenance of new plantations and forestry interventions. The internal personnel of the Park, in particular the forest workers, will guarantee the maintenance of the forestry interventions.

For floating islands at Arno basins (Action C2), the project will grant a system that will reduce the costs of maintenance by AIPO, the public body that manages the basins.

The fish restocking activity, in particular for sturgeons, will be possible for the availability of hatchery and aquaculture facilities, owned by the Ticino Park, working since many years in this faunistic field. Many of these facilities, for example the hatchery at the Fagiana Park center, had been realized in past Life nature project (Conservation of *Salmo marmoratus* and *Rutilus pigus* - 2001/2004) and since that time it has been keeping on producing fishes for the river. The management of the hatchery and of the aquaculture facilities is done by internal personnel of the park, with the help of volunteers and sometimes with consultants on particular topics.

Protection status under National / local law of sites/species/habitats targeted (if relevant)

All the areas of the interventions are included in "Valle del Ticino Regional Park", protected by specific laws, managed by a specific body (the Park) and with a specific service of wardening, cared by rangers employed by the Park. The areas are also all included in the UNESCO Biosphere Reserve "Valle del Ticino" and most of them are included in Natura 2000 sites.

Huso huso (Mediterranean population) is "strictly protected" (Bern Convention, 19 September 1979 and subsequent updates, GU Serie Generale n.122 del 28-5-1998) as it is for *A. naccarii* and *A. sturio*.

How, where and by whom will the equipment acquired be used after the end of the project?

The Park will use the own equipment for various activities of conservation and interpretation inside the protected area, in particular for activities that will be a follow up of the Life actions. The project foresees only the acquisition of biotelemetry equipment to monitor the *Huso huso* after their release in the river. This equipment will be used after the end of the project by the personnel of the Ticino Park, in particular the personnel of the wildlife service, who will continue to monitor as long as possible the released fish. This monitoring activity will be done using the biotelemetry equipment and the boats property of the Park.

To what extent will the results and lessons of the project be actively disseminated after the end of the project to those persons and/or organisations that could best make use of them (please identify these persons/organisations)?

At the end of the project there will be a conference and a volume "Ticino Biosource". The results and the lessons will be actively disseminated after the end of the project.

- Activities with the schools, and the people who will visit the Park centers. The didactic and divulgative material, printed or digital, produced in the project will be available at any Park center. The centers are distributed along all the Park area, as the different interventions of the project. It means that the Park center located near a particular intervention will mostly disseminate that kind of work. For example, in the southern Park area, then centers will mostly disseminate the topics related to the Sturgeons and to the aquatic habitats and fauna at I Geraci; in the Northern Park area will be described, and easily visited, the intervention at the Arno basins, with the floating islands, and so on.
- The constant relationships between the farmers and the technicians of the Park will keep on living after the end of the project. So, the themes of a particular and traditional kind of agriculture, really friendly for biodiversity, helping conservation and rehabilitation of fauna, will be disseminated, optimizing the results of the project actions.
- Direct involvement of fishermen and citizens, not only belonging to the task force for protecting the sturgeons. The task force will live after the end of the project, collecting new volunteers, fishermen and citizens. The results about the Sturgeons restocking, reintroduction, monitoring, conservation of the spawning sites, alien species control, will be disseminated in the future.
- The involvement of citizens for realizing the Atlas of butterflies of the Park ("Citizen Science" approach), will help also for the dissemination after the end of the project. Butterflies are loved by many common people, for their beauty. This atlas will be the perfect key for continuing the dissemination and to let the people know the importance of butterflies for biodiversity. This activity will be realized at first at I Geraci Park center, but all the other Park centers will be able to make the best use of this new conservation topic for all the Park visitors.
- Administrators, researchers, managers of protected areas, rivers authorities involved in this project, contacted for the networking activity, or contacted in future, for the final conference or in different times will benefit and enjoy the project results for any other similar intervention in similar areas or river basins.

How will the long term sustainability of the project's concrete actions be assured?

Many concrete actions will realize new habitats, aquatic and terrestrial. They all will be constructed, or rehabilitated, on public property, mostly of the Ticino Park. These habitats will be planned and realized for the long term stability, that is to say the new habitats will naturally grow, evolve, be colonized by the very many animal and vegetal species. All these habitats will be self-sustainable, becoming part of the Park ecomosaic.

The concrete action related to the reintroduction of *Huso huso* has a very long period horizon, thinking to the long term sustainability. The species will be self-sustainable when it will be able to reproduce and recruit with success, and it will be possible only in the long period (15-20 years). Its sustainability is assured by the river and environmental conditions, strongly improved in the last decades from the qualitative and quantitative water point of view. The river corridor has also strongly improved, with the ongoing construction of the fish passage at the Isola Serafini dam (Life

ConfluPo). Finally, the long term Huso sustainability is assured by the genetic diversity, assessed testing the probable founder stock in the preparatory phase of the reintroduction, of the chosen population, with the aim to maximize the fitness.

About the long term sustainability of the structure built for the visiting of the project intervention areas:

- 1) The Bird Hide at I Geraci will be a landmark for future activities related to birdwatching;
- 2) The panels at I Geraci Visitor Centre will be used during regular Park activities of environmental education and formation;
- 3) The bird - watching trail and other structures at I Geraci will be carried on as a landmark for future developments of the proposed Ramsar Site "Valle del Ticino".

The "products" of the project will become part of the ordinary activities of the Park, as it is happened with previous Life projects, and this is the best guarantee of continuity of the Actions of this Life proposal.



LIFE15 NAT/IT/000989

**Part C – detailed technical description of the
proposed actions**

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LIST OF ALL PROPOSED ACTIONS

A. Preparatory actions, elaboration of management plans and/or of action plans

- A1 Administrative procedures for the project start
- A2 Territorial analysis, consultation and agreements with local farmers
- A3 Proposal for establishing a new SAC for the protection of "Adriatic Sturgeon spawning sites"
- A4 Planning of the creation and restoration of wetlands, wet forests and other aquatic habitats
- A5 Consultations for the creation of a task force to protect *Acipenser naccarii* spawning site

B. Purchase/lease of land and/or compensation payments for use rights

C. Concrete conservation actions

- C1 Creation and restoration of wetlands and other aquatic habitats at "I Geraci", in favour of birds and butterflies of conservation interest
- C2 Ecological restoration of the settling basins of Arno Stream, as a source area for birds of conservation interest
- C3 Enhancement of source areas for endemic fish species along springs, streams and secondary branches of Ticino River
- C4 Management of lowland wet meadows in favour of birds and butterflies of conservation interest
- C5 Restoration and creation of forest habitats of conservation interest at Bernate Ticino
- C6 Restoration of wetlands at Bernate Ticino
- C7 Active defense of *A. naccarii* spawning sites
- C8 Reintroduction of *Huso huso* in Ticino River

D. Monitoring of the impact of the project actions (obligatory)

- D1 Monitoring the efficacy of actions C1 (faunistic aspects) and C6
- D2 Monitoring the efficacy of action C2
- D3 Monitoring the efficacy of action C3
- D4 Monitoring the efficacy of action C4
- D5 Monitoring the efficacy of actions C1 (vegetational and floristic aspects) and C5
- D6 Monitoring the efficacy of action C7
- D7 Monitoring the efficacy of action C8
- D8 Evaluation of the socio-economic impact of conservation actions
- D9 Evaluation of the actions impact on ecosystem services

E. Public awareness and dissemination of results (obligatory)

- E1 Dissemination and awareness raising activities
- E2 Know-how and information transfer and exchange

F. Project management (obligatory)

- F1 Technical and financial project management
- F2 Monitoring of the project progress
- F3 Independent project audit
- F4 After-LIFE Plan

DETAILS OF PROPOSED ACTIONS

A. Preparatory actions, elaboration of management plans and/or of action plans

ACTION A.1: Administrative procedures for the project start

Description and methods employed (what, how, where, when and why):

What - Administrative and technical start of the project. Creation and formalization of the working group.

How - At the beginning of the project, a "Convenzione di Sovvenzione" will be subscribed by all the beneficiaries. In particular, in the first 3 months of the project conventions will be subscribed between the coordinator body (Parco Ticino) and the other beneficiaries (GRAIA and FLA), following the model that is available on the LIFE web site, specifying the roles and responsibilities of each partner.

In this phase, the internal administrative procedures will be defined according to the request of the project. In particular:

- identifying the internal staff of each partner involved in the project and its role, according to the project organogram defined by the Grant Agreement (Action F.1);
- selecting the external assistance that will be involved during the first year of the project, following procedures according to the National and regional laws.

Through this action it will be achieved:

- 2 grant agreements between the Coordinator (Park) and the partners will be stipulated;
- each beneficiary will formally individuate the personnel involved in the project, according to the Form F1 - Direct Personnel costs;
- TicinoPark (as Coordinator) will nominate Project Manager (ext. ass.), Financial Coordinator and Project Leader and the other members of the Steering Committee, according to Action F1;
- the external assistance that will be involved during the first year of the project will be selected, following procedures according to the National and regional laws.

Where - Project area.

When - This Action will start at the beginning of the project and will be completed by the end of 2017, considering the normal bureaucratic procedures, with particular regard to contracts for external assistance.

Why - The Action is necessary for the realization of all the following Actions.

Beneficiary responsible for implementation:

TicinoPark

The action will be developed by all the beneficiaries and each one of them will be responsible for the execution of the procedures and actions for its own body that will be necessary for starting the project and respecting the timetable.

With regards to the Conventions between beneficiaries partners, each partner will be responsible that the agreements will be written according to regional and national laws.

Assumptions related to major costs of the action:

Costs have been estimated considering the involvement of the personnel of each partner for completing the administrative procedures at the start of the project. Costs are based on the daily rates of the employed people and the number of days calculated on the basis of previous similar experiences.

Personnel:

FLA: Additional staff - term-contract worker / Senior graduate, expert on financial reporting of European projects - 200 Daily rate x 10 N. person-days = 2000 €

GRAIA: Permanent staff or civil servant - Chief Executive Officer, part-time employee / senior ichth - 425 Daily rate x 12 N. person-days = 5100 €. **The daily rate is the gross salary as CEO of GRAIA with more of 20 years of experience as project manager and financial coordinator.**

TicinoPark: Permanent staff or civil servant - D3-SPECIALISTA TECNICO / Head of Fauna Office - 200 Daily rate x 24 N. person-days = 4800 €

TicinoPark: Permanent staff or civil servant - C2 - ISTRUTTORE AMMINISTRATIVO CONTABILE / Administrative-Accounting Officer for contracts and agreements - 130 Daily rate x 40 N. person-days = 5200 €

A1's PROJECT DELIVERABLE PRODUCTS

Deliverable name	Deadline
Acts of tasks assignation to the external assistances starting in the first year of project (e.g. Project Manager)	12/2017
The Grants Agreements	12/2017
Formal acts of nomination of each partner's working team	12/2017

A1's PROJECT MILESTONES

Milestone name	Deadline
Steering Committee formalized	01/2017
Entrusted the task to the Project Manager	01/2017
Grant agreement signed by the partners	12/2016
Working team formalized	12/2016

A. Preparatory actions, elaboration of management plans and/or of action plans

ACTION A.2: Territorial analysis, consultation and agreements with local farmers

Description and methods employed (what, how, where, when and why):

What - Identification and involvement of farmers that will permit the complete execution of Action C4.

How - At the start of the project the Park will identify the farmers that are interested in realizing Action C4 through the organization of meetings, in collaboration with FLA, where they will be informed about the Life projects, its aims and the aim of Action C4. Agreements will be signed between the Park and participating farmers, in which will be defined roles, duties and responsibilities.

Where - The central-southern part of Ticino Regional Park, where hay meadows ("marcite") represent one of the most traditional agroecosystems, linked to the production of forage for rearing cows and goats.

When - The Action will last 14 months, between November 2016 till December 2017.

Why - The Action is preparatory and necessary for the realization of Action C4, since it will involve numerous farmers.

This is a "concrete conservation" action, therefore it counts towards the 25% concrete conservation actions requirement, because it 's directly necessary for the execution of the concrete action C4 (Management of lowland wet meadows in favour of birds and butterflies of conservation interest) during the project's lifetime.

It's important to highlight that farmers that are operating in the territory of the Park involved in the proposal of Action C4 of the project are numerous. The referee for the Park will be the Head of the Agriculture Office, that has been working in the last 20 years in strict collaboration with the rural world inside the Park, a sure advantage for the success of the Action C4. FLA will collaborate with him with an expert in the conservation of biodiversity in agricultural habitats.

We foresee one meeting with the farmers of Milano Province that own/manage "marcite", one with the farmers of Pavia Province that own/manage "marcite" and about 25-30 personal meetings or visits on site with farmers and with local people appointed of following the flooding of "marcite", people locally called "campari".

About 60 farmers will be invited to the meetings, corresponding to the total number of farmers that currently manage "marcite" inside the Ticino Park.

Beneficiary responsible for implementation:

TicinoPark

The Action will be executed by the Park, responsible for the execution of the action, and FLA responsible for the scientific contents of the action.

Assumptions related to major costs of the action:

Only personnel will be employed:

FLA: Permanent staff or civil servant - "Inhouse" Personnel / Expert on biodiversity conservation, management and monitoring - 250 Daily rate x 8 N. person-days = 2000 €

TicinoPark: Permanent staff or civil servant - C4 - ISTRUTTORE TECNICO / Head of Agriculture Office - 140
Daily rate x 42 N. person-days = 5880 €

All travel costs incurred during the action will be covered with own sources by the project beneficiaries.

A2's PROJECT DELIVERABLE PRODUCTS

Deliverable name	Deadline
Copies of the conventions between TicinoPark and the local farmers	12/2017

A2's PROJECT MILESTONES

Milestone name	Deadline
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A. Preparatory actions, elaboration of management plans and/or of action plans

ACTION A.3: Proposal for establishing a new SAC for the protection of "Adriatic Sturgeon spawning sites"

Description and methods employed (what, how, where, when and why):

What - The target species will be *Acipenser naccarii*. The main objective of the Action is to maintain in the long term the optimal status of conservation of this stretch of Ticino River as breeding site for the species, designating a Natura 2000 site ad hoc, focused on the conservation of *A. naccarii*.

How - The Action will be executed in 3 phases:

- 1) improving the scientific knowledge of the site;
- 2) preparation of the scientific and technical documents;
- 3) preparation of administrative and bureaucratic materials to be sent to Regione Lombardia for the designation of a new SCI and to the Ministry of the Environment for the designation of a new SAC.

The first and second phase will be cared by GRAIA and the third phase by the Park, with the support of GRAIA in case of need.

The first phase will permit to precisely identify the borders of the site in favour of *A. naccarii*. It will include:

- collection and analysis of available information. Previous information will be evaluated and then improved and verified through field activities;
- field surveys on *A. naccarii* at the site, for identifying movements, behavior, ecological needs, habitat, home range. It will mainly be conducted by GRAIA personnel expert ichthyologists and eventually scuba divers, with the support of a boat, by night, for the observation of breeding adults of sturgeon. This activity will be done between may 2017 and October 2018, with at least 20 night surveys;
- identification of the best techniques for the control of exotic invasive fish species in the breeding area of sturgeons. This activity will be conducted by at least 2 technicians of GRAIA, supported by an external expert in this topic. This activity will include at least 10 campaigns for the control of exotic invasive fishes through electrofishing, during the pre-breeding, breeding and post-breeding periods of the sturgeons, along 9 km of Ticino River, from Pavia to the confluence with Po River, verifying the different techniques in favour of Actions C7 (active defence of *A. naccarii* spawning site) and E2 (sub-action 2.1: Training of the task force involved in action C7).

The second phase will include the preparation of all the scientific and technical documents that are needed for presenting the request of designation of a new SCI and activating all the measures for the preservation of *A. naccarii* and its breeding grounds. This activity will be done by the personnel that was involved in the first phase, including 2 technicians (biologists/naturalists), one ichthyologist and a GIS expert. The last one will define the border of the site according to the information collected by the colleagues, producing shapefiles related to: site border, habitat of community interest, breeding sites of the sturgeons, home range of the sturgeons, hot-spots for the control of exotic invasive fishes. It will be then prepared all the scientific and technical documents to be included in the application for the designation of the site that will be sent by the Park to Regione Lombardia, and will be defined the best strategies for the conservation of the breeding grounds of the species in the site.

The Park will take care of the third phase of the work, that include to prepare the administrative documents

for presenting the proposal of a new Natura 2000 site to Regione Lombardia for designating a new SCI and start the procedure for being as well designated as a SAC. Regione Lombardia - DG Ambiente has showed its support to the project and its actions in the declaration produced in A8 form, so that we can consider that after the proposal by the Park, Regione Lombardia will identify a new SCI, that will be then submitted for the approval of the Ministry of the Environment and then to the European Commission for the definitive designation as SAC. Also Italian Ministry, informed about this projects and its actions, expressed its support in the pertinent A8 Form. These are all the guarantees that we could obtain at this phase of the proposal.

The new Natura 2000 site will have an estimate surface of about 20 hectares and will include the final sector of Ticino River, from Pavia to the Po River.

Where - this action will be located in a stretch of the Ticino River, close to the confluence with the Po River, in the municipality of Travacò Siccomario, where the river creates a large meander and where the breeding of sturgeons has been verified in 2009, 2011, 2014 e 2015. Boundaries of the site will be better identified through specific monitoring surveys.

When - The Action will be conducted in 24 months, in the first two years of the project (Jan-17 - Oct-18), because it's necessary to monitor at least two spawning season of *A. naccarii* to reach significant data from the surveys. The last 6 months are all needed to deal with the approval process of new SCI by Lombardy Region and then by the Ministry, up to its presentation to the European Commission for the definitive designation as SAC.

Why - The Action is necessary due to the fact that this is the only known breeding site and source area of *A. naccarii*, documented in 2009, 2011, 2014 and 2015 and for this reason has an absolute priority for the global conservation of the species, that is evaluated in a critical status of extinction also by IUCN.

This is a "concrete conservation" action, therefore it counts towards the 25% concrete conservation actions requirement, because it improves the conservation status of the *A. naccarii*, being necessary to prevent all the major threats that could severely affect the spawning habitat or the species, threatening the global conservation of the species itself; it's important to highlight that this site is the unique spawning site in the world known and documented today for *Acipenser naccarii*.

The sub-action dealing with the control of the alien species, firstly of *Silurus glanis*, is strictly linked to the main objective of the action: a well defined strategy with site-specific standards and equipment has to be established in order to ensure that *S. glanis* doesn't enter the sturgeon spawning area. This know-how will be suitable to Ticino Park which will be able to carry out this role also after the Life project, in collaboration with a team of local anglers.

The Ministry commits to keep driving, in accordance with national procedures, the proposal for the new SCI. The Region shall send the necessary documentation (compiled SDF, cartography and resolution of the new proposed SCI) with the scientific reasons of the request. Then the Ministry, once the documentation is examined and found appropriate, commits to keep driving the procedure for the designation of the new SAC, within 6 years by the inclusion of the new SCI in the list of proposed SCIs. The designation provides, in accordance with national procedures, the approval by the Region of the appropriate conservation measures and the regional agreement on the designation Ministry decision.

Beneficiary responsible for implementation:

TicinoPark

Park and GRAIA are responsible for this action, each body for its own activities. In particular:

- the Park will take care of the administrative procedure of establishing the new SCI and SAC;
- GRAIA will be responsible for preparing the scientific and technical documents that are necessary for designating a new SAC.

Assumptions related to major costs of the action:

Personnel:

GRAIA: Permanent staff or civil servant - Chief Executive Officer, part-time employee / senior ichth - 425 Daily rate x 32 N. person-days = 13600 €

GRAIA: Permanent staff or civil servant - CCNL Commercio Dipendente III livello / Environmental graduate, expert on Hydrobiology and biomonitoring - 120 Daily rate x 130 N. person-days = 15600 €

GRAIA: Permanent staff or civil servant - CCNL Commercio Dipendente III livello / Senior Environmental graduate, expert on Aquatic Biodiversity Conservation and on the management of Natura 2000 sites - 180 Daily rate x 50 N. person-days = 9000 €

GRAIA: Permanent staff or civil servant - CCNL Commercio Dipendente III Livello / Environmental graduate, expert on Protected Areas Management and Environmental Assessment - 170 Daily rate x 50 N. person-days = 8500 €

GRAIA: Permanent staff or civil servant - CCNL Commercio Dipendente III livello / Autocad and GIS expert - 120 Daily rate x 20 N. person-days = 2400 €

GRAIA: Permanent staff or civil servant - CCNL Commercio Dipendente II livello / Senior Environmental graduate, expert on Biodiversity Conservation and Environmental Education and dissemination - 200 Daily rate x 55 N. person-days = 11000 €

TicinoPark: Permanent staff or civil servant - D3-SPECIALISTA TECNICO / Head of Fauna Office - 200 Daily rate x 10 N. person-days = 2000 €

TicinoPark: Permanent staff or civil servant - C2 - ISTRUTTORE AMMINISTRATIVO CONTABILE / Administrative-Accounting Officer for contracts and agreements - 130 Daily rate x 18 N. person-days = 2340 €

TicinoPark: Permanent staff or civil servant - D2- SPECIALISTA TECNICO / Head of the Natura 2000 Network Park Office - 160 Daily rate x 36 N. person-days = 5760 €

External assistance:

GRAIA - Direct treaty - 1 Naturalistic diver who makes sturgeons visual census underwater (at least 7 campaigns of census): 3500 €

All travel costs incurred during the action will be covered with own sources by the project beneficiaries.

A3's PROJECT DELIVERABLE PRODUCTS

Deliverable name	Deadline
All the formal acts tracing the iter of approval faced	12/2018
Standard form of the proposed SAC	12/2018

A3's PROJECT MILESTONES

Milestone name	Deadline
Institution of the new proposed SAC "Adriatic Sturgeon spawning site" approved by Regione Lombardia and presented to MATTM	12/2018
Proposal of institution of the new SAC submitted by the MATTM to European Commission	10/2020

A. Preparatory actions, elaboration of management plans and/or of action plans

ACTION A.4: Planning of the creation and restoration of wetlands, wet forests and other aquatic habitats

Description and methods employed (what, how, where, when and why):

What - This action consists in planning all the concrete structural interventions foreseen in C actions (C1, C2, C3, C5, C6). At the end of action A4, 7 preliminary projects and 7 definitive-executive projects, with related specific reports, will have been produced and approved for the interventions at: Tenuta "I Geraci" (Action C1), Arno basins (Action C2), Maresco di Villa Reale (Action C3), Ramo Morto and Ramo Delizia (Action C3), Gravello Vecchio (Action C3) and Bernate Ticino (Actions C5 and C6).

How- Designing will be coordinated by the project responsible (also head of forests office) supported by GRAIA planning director engineer. It will proceed with following steps, moving from preliminary designing to definitive and executive designing of the interventions, that will have as annexes specific reports (environmental, wildlife, agronomic, hydrologic, forestal), including incidence evaluations. The Park and FLA will take part to the designing and to the realization of specific reports. The Park will also take care of all the internal procedures for the approval of the interventions.

With regard to the approval of the projects, we specify that:

1. the Park is owner of the surfaces of the interventions of Actions C1, C3, C5 and C6;
2. the Park already obtained from AIPO a written consensus (annexed to the project) for realizing interventions of Action C2.

Where - Areas of interventions.

When - The Action will last 14 months and will finish at the end of December 2017.

Why - The Action is necessary because is propedeutic to the execution of interventions related to Actions C1, C2 and C3.

This is a "concrete conservation" action, therefore it counts towards the 25% concrete conservation actions requirement, because it's directly necessary for the execution of the concrete actions C1, C2, C3, C5 and C6 (Management of lowland wet meadows in favour of birds and butterflies of conservation interest) during the project's lifetime.

Beneficiary responsible for implementation:

TicinoPark

TicinoPark, responsible of forestry planning and the administrative procedures of approval.
GRAIA responsible of engineering planning.

Assumptions related to major costs of the action:

Personnel:

FLA: Permanent staff - Expert on biodiversity conservation, management and monitoring - 250 Daily rate x 44
N. person-days = 11000 €

FLA: Permanent staff - Head of the Biodiversity and Protected Areas Office - FLA Project coordinator - 257
Daily rate x 15 N. person-days = 3855 €

GRAIA: Permanent staff - Environmental graduate, expert on Protected Areas Management and
Environmental Assessment - 170 Daily rate x 65 N. person-days = 11050 €

GRAIA: Permanent staff - senior Environmental Engineer, Chief Designer Officer - 425 Daily rate (**gross
salary as CEO of GRAIA with more of 20 years of experience as Chief Designer Officer**) x 30 N.
person-days = 12750 €.

GRAIA: Permanent staff - Autocad and GIS expert - 120 Daily rate x 120 N. person-days = 14400 €

GRAIA: Permanent staff - Senior Environmental graduate, expert on Biodiversity Conservation and
Environmental Education and dissemination - 200 Daily rate x 34 N. person-days = 6800 €

TicinoPark: Permanent staff - D3-SPECIALISTA TECNICO / Head of Fauna Office - 200 Daily rate x 15 N.
person-days = 3000 €

TicinoPark: Permanent staff - D6 - SPECIALISTA TECNICO/ Head of Forests Office - Project leader - 215 Daily
rate x 40 N. person-days = 8600 €

TicinoPark: Permanent staff - D2- SPECIALISTA TECNICO / Head of the Natura 2000 Network Park Office - 160
Daily rate x 30 N. person-days = 4800 €

TicinoPark: Permanent staff - C5 - ISTRUTTORE AMMINISTRATIVO CONTABILE / Administrative-Accounting
Officer for contracts and agreements - 140 Daily rate x 25 N. person-days = 3500 €

External assistance:

GRAIA - Direct treaty - 1 Senior environmental engineer, for planning interventions foreseen in C actions:
35000 €

TicinoPark - public tender - 1 Senior Botanist, expert on Habitats, for planning consulting about botanic
aspects, for planning Action C5: 9000 €

TicinoPark - public tender - 1 Senior Forestry-Agronomist for planning Action C1: 7000 €

TicinoPark - public tender - 1 Senior Forestry-Agronomist for planning Action C5: 16000 €

Name of the picture: Planning activities, action related and executors

Referring Actions	Description	Executor	Activities
C1	Preliminary, definitive and executive projects of interventions at Geracl and specific procedures of approval	GRAIA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Engineering design - Hydraulic study - Landscape report - Study for incidence evaluation
		FLA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Collaboration to designing with regard to wildlife aspects
		ParcoTicino	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Coordination of designing and bureaucratic procedures for their approval
C2	Preliminary, definitive and executive projects of interventions at Arno basins and specific procedures of approval	GRAIA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Engineering design - Hydraulic study - Landscape report - Study for Incidence evaluation
		FLA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Collaboration to designing with regard to wildlife aspects
		ParcoTicino	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Coordination of designing and bureaucratic procedures for their approval
C3	Preliminary, definitive and executive projects of interventions of restoration of springs and secondary branches of Ticino River	GRAIA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Engineering design - Hydraulic study - Landscape report - Study for Incidence evaluation
		FLA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Collaboration to designing with regard to wildlife aspects
		ParcoTicino	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Coordination of designing and bureaucratic procedures for their approval
C5	Preliminary, definitive and executive projects of interventions of restoration of forest habitats of community interest at Bernate Ticino	ParcoTicino	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Forestry designing - Landscape report - Study for Incidence evaluation - Coordination of designing and bureaucratic procedures for their approval
C6	Preliminary, definitive and executive projects of interventions of creation of wetlands at Bernate Ticino	GRAIA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Engineering design - Hydraulic study - Landscape report - Study for Incidence evaluation
		FLA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Collaboration to designing with regard to wildlife aspects
		ParcoTicino	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Coordination of designing and bureaucratic procedures for their approval

A4's PROJECT DELIVERABLE PRODUCTS

Deliverable name	Deadline
Copies of the executive/definitive project of each intervention within C1, C2, C3, C5 and C6 actions	12/2017

A4's PROJECT MILESTONES

Milestone name	Deadline
Plannings of structural interventions of C actions approved	12/2017

A. Preparatory actions, elaboration of management plans and/or of action plans

ACTION A.5: Consultations for the creation of a task force to protect *Acipenser naccarii* spawning site

Description and methods employed (what, how, where, when and why):

What - Target species of the action are *Acipenser naccarii* and, after its reintroduction with Action C8, also *Huso huso*. The objective is to involve the local associations of anglers on the active defense of *A. naccarii* spawning site (target of Action A2 and C7) and also of *Huso huso*, after its reintroduction, before it takes the long way towards the sea. It will be established a task force, composed of a minimum of 10 volunteers, who will sign a Task Force establishment formal act, committing themselves to attend the course foreseen with Action E2 (Sub-action E2.1) and to participate to Action C7.

How - Some meetings will be organized to make aware local angling associations of the Life project contents. The meetings will involve the audience on *A. naccarii* conservation, on *H. huso* reintroduction and on the related ecological/conservation aspects. In the choice of the target associations there will be taken into account the experiences and collaborations performed in the past (especially with FIPSAS Pavia). The task force group will face an operative formation (individuation of spawning beds, identification of the sturgeon yearlings, *S. glanis* population control technique; etc., see E2.1 sub-action) to be ready for the active defense of *A. naccarii* spawning area and *Huso huso* reintroduction (Action C7). The volunteers will be able to explain to the citizens the main project aspects and the importance of the cited area (they will promote its touristic-recreational sustainable use).

TicinoPark and GRAIA has worked for many years in the field of fauna conservation, developing profitable relationships and collaborations with some local authorities, associations and private citizens. The recruit of the task force should not face any complications. The proposal produces the support of the project by FIPSAS Pavia, the biggest angling association in this area which manifests its interest and positive intention to cooperate with the working group of LifeTicinoBiosource (see A8 declaration of support).

It's foreseen a minimum of 4 meetings with all the local associations involved, with a dozen or more meetings with representatives of the associations encountered individually. A number of about 100 local anglers will be invited to participate to the meetings. We expect that in the task force group will participate a number of at least a dozen people, in order to organize regular patrols within Action C7.

Where - Pavia Province.

When - The action will last from the beginning of the project till the end of June 2017.

Why - The current action is preparatory to C7 Action (active defense of *A. naccarii* spawning area and *Huso huso* reintroduction). The identification of the only known Italian spawning site of *A. naccarii* has been possible thanks to the passionate (and experienced) personnel of a local authority also operating as volunteer: since it is very difficult to identify a sturgeon spawning bed or some sturgeon fries (Total length: approximately 1-2 cm) it becomes necessary to involve, recruit, (A4 Action) educate and train (E2.1 sub-action) a local task force to C7 Action.

This is a "concrete conservation" action, therefore it counts towards the 25% concrete conservation actions requirement, because it's directly necessary for the execution of the concrete action C7 during the project's lifetime.

Beneficiary responsible for implementation:

TicinoPark

The action will be undertaken from GRAIA and TicinoPark. TicinoPark will be responsible for the contacts with anglers and associations, GRAIA will responsible for technical and scientific contents

Assumptions related to major costs of the action:

Personnel:

GRAIA: Permanent staff or civil servant - Chief Executive Officer, part-time employee / senior ichthyologist - 425 Daily rate x 5 N. person-days = 2125 €

TicinoPark: Permanent staff or civil servant - D3-SPECIALISTA TECNICO / Head of Fauna Office - 200 Daily rate x 25 N. person-days = 5000 €

All travel costs incurred during the action will be covered with own sources by the project beneficiaries.

A5's PROJECT DELIVERABLE PRODUCTS

Deliverable name	Deadline
Task Force establishment formal act	06/2017

A5's PROJECT MILESTONES

Milestone name	Deadline
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C. Concrete conservation actions

ACTION C.1: Creation and restoration of wetlands and other aquatic habitats at "I Geraci", in favour of birds and butterflies of conservation interest

Description and methods employed (what, how, where, when and why):

What - All the interventions planned with Action A.4 at "I Geraci" will be realized; they include restoration and creation of wetlands, wet woodlands and dry habitats, according to the executive designs formally approved by the Competent Authority (TicinoPark itself).

How - The Park will be the referee for administrative procedures and authorizations related to the interventions, according to the present legislation and will care about the execution of forestry interventions.

GRAIA will have the role of Director of the interventions, with the technical and scientific collaboration of FLA, that will involve the Head of Biodiversity and Protected Areas Office and an expert in conservation of wet habitats and their biodiversity with a "inhouse" contract.

Interventions will be realized at "I Geraci", in the municipality of Motta Visconti (MI), in a property that is owned by the Park. They will include restoration and creation of wetlands, wet woodlands and dry habitats, according to the projects that will be designed and approved through Action A4.

In details, the following interventions as listed below will be realized:

- creation of 11.000 square metres new wet grasslands in favour of birds of community interest and *Lycaena dispar*;
- creation of 7.000 square metres new reedbeds, in favour of birds of community interest;
- creation of 8.000 square metres new wetlands, habitat 3150 "Natural eutrophic lakes with Magnopotamion or Hydrocharition-type vegetation", in favour of birds of community interest;
- creation of 8.000 square metres "lanche " (dead branches of the river), in favour of birds of community interest;
- creation of 4.500 square metres embankement, that will be used for creating a "birdwatching trail" (see Action E1, sub-Action E1.2) and that could be used as a breeding habitat by hole-nesting birds such as Kingfisher;
- restoration of 3 hectares wet woodlands classified as habitat 91E0* "Alluvial forests with *Alnus glutinosa* and *Fraxinus excelsior*";
- restoration through forestry interventions (pruning, planting, control of exotic species) of woodlands classified as 'habitat 91F0 "Riparian mixed forests of *Quercus robur*, *Ulmus laevis* and *Ulmus minor*, *Fraxinus excelsior* or *Fraxinus angustifolia*";
- creation of 2 hectares habitat 4030 "European dry heaths".

The feasibility study of the interventions is produced in Annex II attached to the proposal.

Where - Interventions will be realized at "I Geraci", in the municipality of Motta Visconti (MI),

in a property that is owned by the Park.

When - The Action will last for 15 months on the years 2018 and 2019, completing all the works for march 2019. Forestry interventions for the maintenance of the planted trees and bushes will go on till the end of the project.

Why - The 120 km of the valley of Ticino River are an important migratory flyway for many bird species (Casale 2015). For species that are linked to wetlands, at present there are few stop over sites:

- the Arno basins in the northern sector of the valley (Varese province);
- the wetlands at the confluence between Ticino and Po rivers in the southern sector (Pavia province).

A similar context of wetlands in the central sector (Milano province) is at present absent.

The wetland complex that will be realized with Action C1 at Motta Visconti will fill up this absence and will create suitable habitats for species of community interest like *Ixobrychus minutus*, *Egretta garzetta*, *Casmerodius albus*, *Nycticorax nycticorax*, *Circus aeruginosus*, *Alcedo atthis*, and for bird species that are declining in Europe according to the recent "European Red List of Birds" (BirdLife International 2015) like *Anas querquedula*, *Vanellus vanellus*, *Anthus pratensis* and for the butterfly *Lycaena dispar* (Annex II HD). This area will become a "source area" for many aquatic bird species in the southern sector of the Park.

Therefore this is a "concrete conservation" action and it counts towards the 25% concrete conservation actions requirement, because it improves the conservation status of species of community interest like *Ixobrychus minutus*, *Egretta garzetta*, *Casmerodius albus*, *Nycticorax nycticorax*, *Circus aeruginosus* and for bird species that are declining in Europe according to the recent "European Red List of Birds" (BirdLife International 2015) like *Anas querquedula*, *Vanellus vanellus*, *Anthus pratensis* and for the butterfly *Lycaena dispar* (Annex II HD), restoring and creating habitats and ecological connectivity among habitats suitable to these species for breeding, foraging, migrating or wintering.

Bibliography

BirdLife International 2015. European Red List of Birds (ERLB). European Commission.

Casale F., 2015. Atlante degli Uccelli del Parco lombardo della Valle del Ticino. Parco del Ticino e Fondazione Lombardia Ambiente.

We believe that the restoration of the settling basins of Arno Stream can be considered a "green infrastructure", for at least three major reasons. The first is because it will be realized through renaturalisation practices, therefore through "building with nature" techniques, in order to restore continuity and ecological functions of environmental matrices and to eliminate barriers and the use of natural resources centred on human activities. Like a "green infrastructure", in accordance with the Community definition (COM(2013) 249 final), the intervention will be planned and managed in a way that provides a broad spectrum of ecosystem services, ensuring benefits at different levels:

- **Enhanced efficiency of natural resources, in particular the storage of freshwater resources;**
- **Climate change mitigation and adaptation, with Carbon storage and sequestration, temperature control;**
- **Water management, in particular water purification, enhancing soil's organic matter and improving land quality and making land more attractive;**

- Land and soil management, enhancing property values;
- Conservation benefits, enhancing the existence value of habitat, species and genetic diversity;
- Tourism and recreation, making the destination more attractive, enhancing recreational opportunities;
- Education, making it a teaching resource and a „natural laboratory“;
- Resilience, enhancing the resilience of ecosystem services.

The second reason is that the structures we're going to realize will be preserved in the future even after the end of the project.

The third reason is because interventions like this are subject to environmental impact assessment procedure (known in Italy as VInCA), landscape authorisation procedure (in Italy: Autorizzazione Paesaggistica), and so on, as well as any other type of infrastructures.

For all these reasons we believe that the cost of the restoration work foreseen in Action C.1 should be considered as infrastructure costs.

Beneficiary responsible for implementation:

TicinoPark

The Action will be realized by the Park, in collaboration with FLA and GRAIA, each one caring about activities of its own competence

Assumptions related to major costs of the action:

Main costs related to the interventions are described in the feasibility study (see Annex II of the project: Studio di fattibilità degli interventi alla tenuta de "I Geraci");

Infrastructure:

TicinoPark - public tender - Creation and restoration of wetlands and other aquatic habitats at Motta Visconti, in favour of birds, amphibians and butterflies of conservation interest - 550.000,00 €

Personnel:

FLA: Permanent staff or civil servant - "Inhouse" Personnel / Expert on biodiversity conservation, management and monitoring - 250 Daily rate x 32 N. person-days = 8000 €

FLA: Permanent staff or civil servant - CCNL Commercio Impiegato Liv. Q - tempo pieno / Head of the Biodiversity and Protected Areas Office - FLA Project coordinator - 257 Daily rate x 8 N. person-days = 2056 €

GRAIA: Permanent staff or civil servant - Chief Executive Officer, part-time employee / senior Environmental Engineer, Chief Designer Officer - 425 Daily rate x 40 N. person-days = 17000 €

TicinoPark: Permanent staff or civil servant - D3-SPECIALISTA TECNICO / Head of Fauna Office - 200 Daily rate x 12 N. person-days = 2400 €

TicinoPark: Permanent staff or civil servant - C2 - ISTRUTTORE AMMINISTRATIVO CONTABILE / Administrative-

Accounting Officer for contracts and agreements - 130 Daily rate x 24 N. person-days = 3120 €

TicinoPark: Permanent staff or civil servant - D6 - SPECIALISTA TECNICO/ Head of Forests Office - Project leader - 215 Daily rate x 12 N. person-days = 2580 €

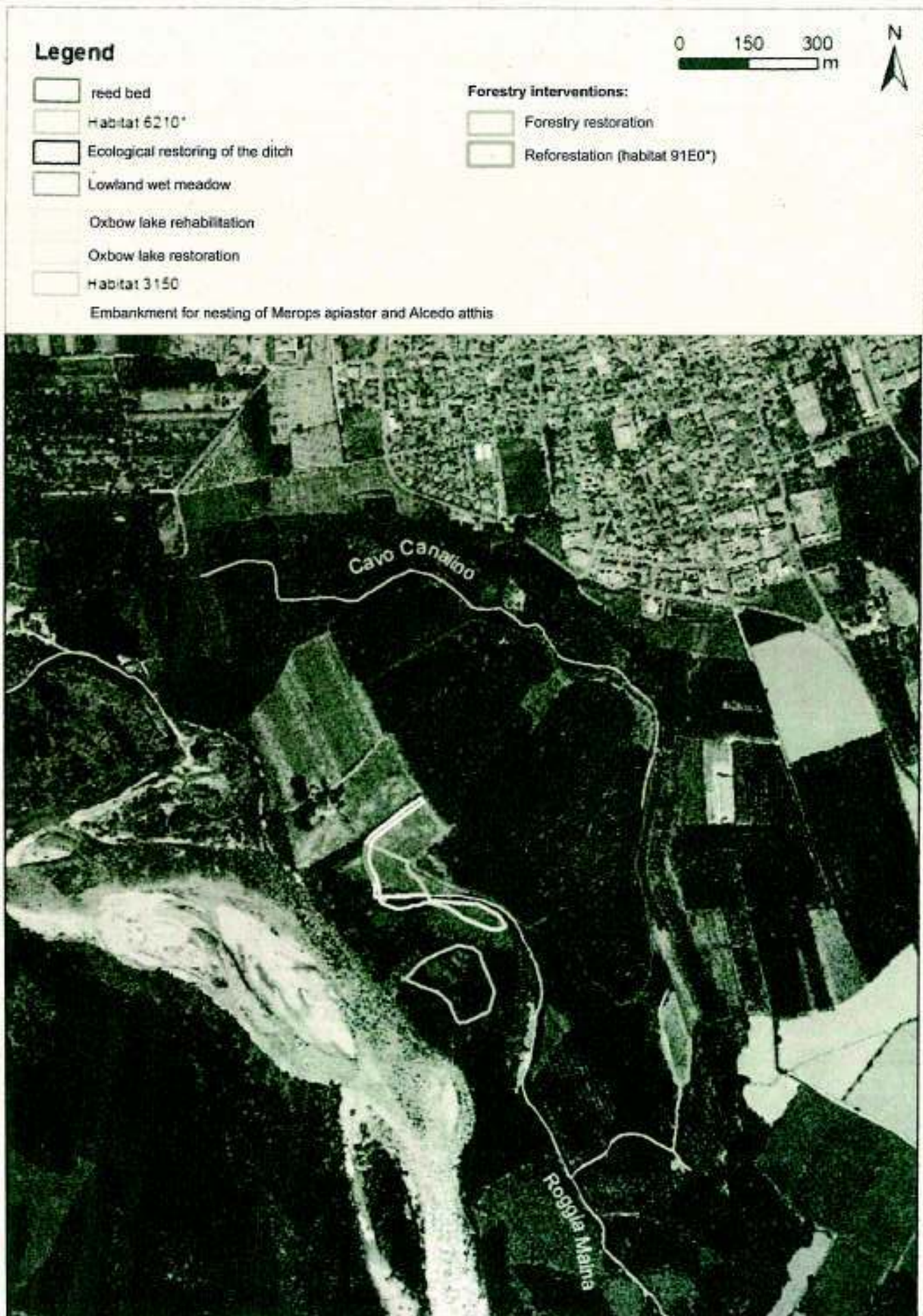
TicinoPark: Permanent staff or civil servant - D2- SPECIALISTA TECNICO / Head of the Natura 2000 Network Park Office - 160 Daily rate x 12 N. person-days = 1920 €

External assistance:

GRAIA - Direct treaty - 1 Forest-Agronomist Consultant for forestry aspects - 8000 €

TicinoPark - public tender - 1 Senior Forestry-Agronomist for forestry works direction of Action C1 - 7000 €

Name of the picture: Table of the interventions foreseen (see the Annex II part 1, 2, 3)



Name of the picture: Computation of the intervention

PROCESSES AND ACTIONS PLANNED	Removal of silt/clay/ Muck	Recultivation	Rehabilit. of SCS	Action against lake	Onshore water treatment	Creation of habitat SCS	Creation of habitat SCS and reinforcement for the existing gardens	Forestry restoration	Natural filtration ecosystem	TOTAL COST AMOUNT
Actions of environmental rehabilitation of GERACI area										
Excavation	€ 24,000.00	€ 28,020.00	€ 34,000.00	€ 6,000.00	€ 28,000.00					€ 120,000.00
Landfill							€ 115,100.00			€ 115,100.00
Banks revegetation	€ 2,000.00	€ 2,000.00	€ 2,000.00		€ 2,000.00					€ 8,000.00
Grass sowing	€ 19,000.00						€ 1,000.00			€ 20,000.00
Creation of habitat SCS and forestry restoration						€ 70,000.00	€ 1,000.00			€ 71,000.00
Bridge construction	€ 500.00	€ 500.00								€ 1,000.00
Natural filtration ecosystem									€ 35,000.00	€ 35,000.00
Forestry restoration								€ 68,000.00		€ 68,000.00
Vertical banks creation: bushes and trees planting: unexpected events							€ 14,719.67			€ 14,719.67
Cost (IVA free)	€ 45,500.00	€ 30,520.00	€ 38,000.00	€ 6,000.00	€ 30,000.00	€ 70,000.00	€ 181,819.67	€ 68,000.00	€ 35,000.00	€ 450,819.67
Cost (IVA included)	€ 55,510.00	€ 37,210.00	€ 43,920.00	€ 7,320.00	€ 36,600.00	€ 85,400.00	€ 188,820.00	€ 80,520.00	€ 41,700.00	€ 550,000.00

C1's PROJECT DELIVERABLE PRODUCTS

Deliverable name	Deadline
Certificate of regular execution of works	03/2019

C1's PROJECT MILESTONES

Milestone name	Deadline
Intervention of creation and restoration of wetlands and other aquatic habitats at Geraci completed	03/2019

C. Concrete conservation actions

ACTION C.2: Ecological restoration of the settling basins of Arno Stream, as a source area for birds of conservation interest

Description and methods employed (what, how, where, when and why):

What - The Action will realize:

- floating islands (about 4.000 square metres) suitable for many bird species as breeding and foraging sites;
- hedges of bushes (about 900) along the borders of the basins, in favour of foraging of Passerines during autumn migration.

Floating islands will be of two typologies:

- with dense marsh vegetation, suitable for species like *Aythya nyroca* and *Ixobrychus minutus*;
- with scarce or absent (gravel) vegetation, suitable for species like *Himantopus himantopus*.

This intervention will achieve the presence of bird species of conservation interest, monitored through Action D2. In particular, the area will be suitable for breeding species of community interest like *Aythya nyroca*, *Ixobrychus minutus* and *Himantopus himantopus* and for other bird species of conservation interest during breeding, migration or wintering, in particular species that are inserted in Annex I of Birds directive, in the ERLB - European Red List of Birds (European Commission 2015) or designated as SPEC - Species of European Conservation Concern (BirdLife International 2004) like *Anas strepera*, *Anas querquedula*, *Aythya ferina*, *Aythya fuligula*, *Egretta garzetta*, *Casmerodius albus*, *Nycticorax nycticorax*, *Circus aeruginosus*, *Milvus migrans*, *Gallinago gallinago*, *Actitis hypoleuca*, *Tringa glareola*.

How - The feasibility study of the intervention is attached to the proposal as Annex III.

At the beginning of the project will be identified experts in designing projects of wetland restoration and in planting bushes suitable for the foraging activity of migratory birds during autumn migration.

After that, it will be realized by GRAIA the project of the interventions, with the scientific support of FLA, through the Head of Biodiversity and Protected Areas Office and a "inhouse" person that has a long experience in wetland management in favor of birds.

Then the Park will assign, according to the present legislation, the contracts for the execution of the interventions. The Park will also take care of the administrative aspects that are needed before the execution of the interventions.

Where - Interventions will be taken at the settling basins of Arno stream, in the municipality of Castano Primo (MI). This area is managed by AIPo (Agenzia Interregionale per il Po, www.aipo.it) which has already expressed its written consensus for realizing interventions of Action C2 in the letter of support (Form A8) attached to the proposal.

When - The Action will be realized approximately in the period December 2017 - Jun 2019. <even if it's not highlighted in the timetable, the maintenance activities for planted bushes will go on till the end of the project.

Why - The Action is necessary for creating a system of different wetland habitats in the northern sector of Ticino valley, a source area for many aquatic bird species of conservation species.

This is a "concrete conservation" action and it counts towards the 25% concrete conservation actions requirement, because it improves the conservation status of species of community interest like *Aythya nyroca*, *Ixobrychus minutus* and *Himantopus himantopus* and for other bird species of conservation interest, in particular species that are inserted in Annex I of Birds directive, in the ERLB - European Red List of Birds (European Commission 2015) or designated as SPEC - Species of European Conservation Concern (BirdLife International 2004) like *Anas strepera*, *Anas querquedula*, *Aythya ferina*, *Aythya fuligula*, *Egretta garzetta*, *Casmerodius albus*, *Nycticorax nycticorax*, *Circus aeruginosus*, *Milvus migrans*, *Gallinago gallinago*, *Actitis hypoleuca*, *Tringa glareola*, through the creation and requalification of habitats suitable to these species for breeding, migrating or wintering in the northern sector of Ticino valley, currently lacking in these habitats.

The Ministry, at the moment, has not enough elements to decide if keep driving the designation of the proposed SCI/SPA "Brughiere di Malpensa e di Lonate". Meanwhile, although Ticino Park continue to support the big value of the site for the conservation of EU biodiversity, we would stress that, no matter what the outcome of the decisions concerning the designation of the area as a Nature2000 site, its conservation is however guaranteed. This area is indeed owned by Lombardy Region, that maintain the Arno Stream settling basins for their hydraulic function (that is to receive the Arno Stream waters), which is a priority for human health, meaning that they'll be preserved as they are all over the years in the future.

Beneficiary responsible for implementation:

TicinoPark

The Action will be developed by the Park, in collaboration with FLA and GRAIA, each one taking care and being responsible of its own competences.

Assumptions related to major costs of the action:

Costs comes from a specific feasibility study (Annex III of this project).

Infrastructure:

TicinoPark - public tender - Ecological restoration of the settling basins of Arno Stream, as a source area for birds of conservation interest - 210.000,00 €

Personnel:

FLA: Permanent staff - "Inhouse" Personnel / Expert on biodiversity conservation, management and monitoring - 250 Daily rate x 24 N. person-days = 6000 €

FLA: Permanent staff - CCNL Commercio Impiegato Liv. Q - tempo pieno / Head of the Biodiversity and Protected Areas Office - FLA Project coordinator - 257 Daily rate x 8 N. person-days = 2056 €

GRAIA: Permanent staff - Chief Executive Officer, part-time employee / senior ichthyologist - 425 Daily rate x 2 N. person-days = 850 €

GRAIA: Permanent staff - Chief Executive Officer, part-time employee / senior Environmental Engineer, Chief Designer Officer - 425 Daily rate x 10 N. person-days = 4250 €

TicinoPark: Permanent staff - D3-SPECIALISTA TECNICO / Head of Fauna Office - 200 Daily rate x 10 N. person-days = 2000 €

TicinoPark: Permanent staff - C2 - ISTRUTTORE AMMINISTRATIVO CONTABILE / Administrative-Accounting Officer for contracts and agreements - 130 Daily rate x 18 N. person-days = 2340 €

TicinoPark: Permanent staff - D6 - SPECIALISTA TECNICO/ Head of Forests Office - Project leader - 215 Daily rate x 10 N. person-days = 2150 €

TicinoPark: Permanent staff - D2- SPECIALISTA TECNICO / Head of the Natura 2000 Network Park Office - 160 Daily rate x 10 N. person-days = 1600 €

External assistance:

GRAIA - Direct treaty - 1 Forest-Agronomist Consultant for forestry aspects: 5000 €

GRAIA - Direct treaty - 1 Environmental Engineer, for the assistance to the works direction: 5000 €

All travel costs incurred during the action will be covered with own sources by the project beneficiaries.