

REPORT OF SHARING AND ASSESSING SCENARIOS

(Deliverable 3.3.2 – English summary)

Project Partner n. 9: RCDI - Development and Innovation Network

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19 November 2018

A. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This section scope is to introduce the project, explain what were the territorial labs and focus groups aimed to accomplish and to list the key findings.

Chapter number and name		Contents
A. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	I. Overview	<p>RCDI held a series of local meetings and focus groups between March and October 2018 involving various stakeholders, including Local Authorities (municipal and parish), regional public administration bodies responsible for water management, nature conservation, spatial planning and tourism development, representatives of local private economic operators and other local interest groups.</p> <p>The process described here is qualitative in nature and is part of an overall project that began in 2017 and aims at establishing participated governance in the Melides Lagoon wetland. The purpose of the process was to gather information concerning possible interventions regarding the sustainability of the wetland, and to gain a better understanding of the benefits that these interventions could have on the area. Through the participated process, the partner gathered information to build two intervention scenarios: the oriented scenario with all possible or desired interventions and the preferred scenario that resulted from the focus groups.</p>
	II. Key findings	<p>What follows is a brief summary of the relevant findings and scenarios assessment from data generated in the focus group interviews. Details about the methodology and an expanded explanation and discussion of the findings of this study can be found in the report. Examples of the focus group questions, informed consent documents, and demographics can be found in the appendices.</p> <p>The sharing and assessment process was based on input from previous work on the characteristics of the wetland, a SWOT analysis discussed with the stakeholders in previous meetings and scientific reports of preceding research projects.</p> <p>Hence, territorial labs were oriented to the wetland critical issues organised into de following categories: sanitation, agriculture, tourism, fishing, lagoon and river environment, and governance issues. In each category, a set of interventions was identified and discussed, first with the relevant stakeholders, and later in a general assembly with all stakeholders. In the process, additional measures were added to the list, some were adjusted and others eliminated. A special concern of the project team was to assess and understand the technical feasibility of each intervention. This was done through expert consultation, namely university and research units.</p> <p>The first list of interventions included all proposed or desired measures to meet the stakeholders' expectations: the oriented scenario. This list was shared and discussed in three focus groups, one for agriculture, the other for tourism, and the last one including all categories. The result was the preferred scenario.</p> <p>One of the most important findings of the process was that rice farming has less negative effect on the water quality of the Lagoon than expected. Production methods currently used by farmers already minimise impacts and change to organic production, for instance, could only be envisaged in a new framework of financial incentives.</p> <p>Thus, waste water discharges are the major pressure on the wetland ecological system. This requires a solution based on hard infrastructure, which has to be prepared by the Municipal Services in cooperation with key stakeholders.</p> <p>Tourism upgrading is another necessity; several measures have been discussed in this</p>

		<p>context.</p> <p>Interventions on the lagoon and river environment have an important scientific component. For this reason, local stakeholders didn't react much to the interventions proposed. The most critical issues regarding the measures discussed are related to land ownership and financial resources.</p> <p>Finally, governance issues are related to local stakeholders' empowerment to monitor the wetland and to supervise the implementation of the action plan, and also to the need to join efforts for the development of the most important activities: agriculture and tourism.</p>
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B. REPORT

This section scopes are:

- to describe the focus groups process and methodology
- to explain the scenarios' assessment

Chapter number and name		Contents
B. REPORT	I. Introduction	<p>This report describes the process of building and sharing intervention scenarios for the Melides Lagoon wetland, as part of the methodology adopted to implement a wetland contract in the area.</p> <p>The Melides Lagoon is protected under the Nature 2000 Network, included in the Comporta/Galé site of community importance (PTCON0034 - Comporta/Galé). Like most Mediterranean coastal land-locked lagoons its sustainability depends on reducing human pressures on the ecosystems and coping with unfavourable effects of climate and water dynamics. This is the rationale to establish the wetland contract in the Melides Lagoon, bringing together environmental goals and the development of economic activities.</p> <p>The report is divided into two major sections: a detailed description of the methodology, and an explanation of Key Findings along with excerpts from focus group interviews that reflect and elucidate these findings. The Methodology describes the rationale and design of the focus group project as well as a more detailed explanation of participants and the questions asked of participants during focus groups. The Key Findings summarizes and synthesizes data gleaned from the focus groups.</p>
	II. Methodology	<p>This section explains the methods used to elicit stakeholder needs, expectations, motivations and conflicts.</p> <p>The process was preceded by individual contacts with key stakeholders and one general assembly to promote stakeholders' adhesion to the project and identify critical issues.</p> <p>The approach to build, share and evaluate scenarios included preparatory thematic meetings and general stakeholders' assemblies. The first stage consisted of a series of thematic meetings with individual organisations and representatives of the major interest groups in the area. Initial meetings served to know the stakeholders and to understand their needs and expectations. Later in the process, these meetings were oriented to discuss trends and future interventions. These meetings were also useful to gather qualitative information on key activities, such as rice production and tourism. A particular concern was to discuss interaction amongst interventions envisaged by the different interest groups. The thematic areas covered were sanitation, agriculture, tourism and culture, and environment.</p> <p>The information gathered was checked and presented for discussion in three focus groups. Two major meetings were organised, one on agriculture and the other on tourism, to discuss development strategies for these economic activities. The final discussion with all stakeholders took place in a general assembly oriented to share, debate and reach consensus on the preferred scenario.</p>
	II.a Focus groups	<p>[Describe how many focus group you held, the date and location of meetings. Mention the ways that you obtained the input, such as audio or video recording or note taking. List the questions that the facilitators asked to participants.]</p> <p>In addition to the 16 individual organisation meetings that provided the input to build</p>

		<p>range of possible actions in the different intervention areas, three focus groups were held to discuss and search for consensual solutions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <p>Focus group 1 - Agriculture, held July 30th 2018 in Melides (local administration premises)</p> <p><i>Objectives:</i> to discuss development strategies for agriculture in the context of the sustainability of the wetland.</p> <p><i>Input:</i> note taking in previous meetings with individual organisations (interviews with local rice farmers, regional technical assistance organisation, organic agriculture association, etc.).</p> <p><i>Questions:</i> future prospects for rice production; how to increase profit; new products, new markets; the possibility of organic production; interaction with tourism.</p> <p><i>Outcome:</i> consensus on possible interventions to be further elaborated.</p> <p>Focus group 2 - Tourism, held September 27th 2018 in Melides (local administration premises)</p> <p><i>Objectives:</i> to discuss interventions regarding tourism development</p> <p><i>Input:</i> note taking in from previous meetings with regional tourism organisations and with the municipal council.</p> <p><i>Questions:</i> weaknesses and opportunities of local tourism; the need for upgrading tourism offer; promoting synergies.</p> <p><i>Outcome:</i> consensus on development strategy and key interventions.</p> <p>Focus group 3 - 2nd General Assembly of Stakeholders, held October 17th 2018 in Melides (local administration premises)</p> <p><i>Objectives:</i> to discuss interventions (oriented scenario), to select the intervention scenario</p> <p><i>Input:</i> note taking in from previous meetings; office work; scientific reasearch</p> <p><i>Questions:</i> critical issues for the sustainability of the Lagoon: current pressures, pollution focus, evolution trends; interventions in sanitation, agriculture, fishing, tourism and environment; governance measures. Participants were asked to fill in a questionnaire regarding their position relatively to each one of the measures in the oriented scenario.</p> <p><i>Outcome:</i> consensus on the future vision for the Melides Lagoon and on the interventions needed.</p> <p>II.b Participants profile</p> <p>[Describe how many people participated, what was their profile, how they were recruited, and any relevant information.]</p> <p>The participants were recruited among the stakeholders identified at the beginning of the project, a total of 21 organisations/interest groups. They are basically the local economic operators or their representatives, the local authorities and the representatives of the relevant public administration agencies operating in the area. Recruitment was made by personalised email followed by telephone contact.</p> <p>The individual organisation meetings in the preparatory stage were mostly interviews with one or two persons. The Focus Groups had the following participants:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <p>Focus Group 1 – Agriculture: 9 participants (rice farmers and representatives of organic agriculture association)</p>
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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus Group 2 – Tourism: 20 participants (local accommodation operators, local restaurants, local public administration, regional tourism authority) • Focus Group 3 – General Assembly of Stakeholders: 25 participants from 12 institutions/interest groups. <p>II.c Data analysis</p> <p>[Describe how you analysed data from across all focus groups, so it could be organized into categories. Then explain how these categories were analysed to determine the interconnectedness of issues and conditions that have given motivated the scenarios assessment.]</p> <p>The approach to possible/desired interventions was based on the wetland critical issues identified in the previous phase (characterisation of the pilot area, SWOT analysis and discussion during the 1st General Assembly of Stakeholders). The critical issues provided the criteria for the categories to build the intervention scenarios: sanitation, agriculture, tourism and culture, fishery, lagoon and river ecosystems.</p> <p>Scenarios were arranged in the form of one table for each category, showing for each intervention: description of the measures, entities to be involved, constraints, difficulties and time frame.</p> <p>The tables (oriented scenario) were presented and discussed in the general stakeholders' assembly held to assess and select consensual interventions (preferred scenario).</p> <p>Interaction of interventions was identified during the thematic meetings, either through the critical analysis of the participants' arguments or through the assessment made by the project experts.</p>								
	<p>III. Results</p>	<p>This section reports on the results of the analysis conducted on the focus groups, which revealed a number of key findings useful for assessing the scenarios.</p> <p>[List and summarize the information obtained with the focus groups. Organize by topic, identify any key findings under each outcome than summarize the discussion under each outcome, including representative quotes, results of yes or no questions, and quantitative data. Please copy the box that follows as many times as it may be necessary]</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="502 1350 1481 1993"> <tr> <td data-bbox="513 1373 762 1563"> <p>Topic 1</p> </td> <td data-bbox="762 1373 1469 1563"> <p>Contamination of the Lagoon by urban waste water; the system is based on septic tanks that are not reliable, particularly in the summer when residential/tourism occupation has a peak and climate conditions are not favourable (high temperatures, no precipitation, low water volume in the Lagoon).</p> </td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="513 1592 762 1653"> <p><i>1. Question asked during focus group</i></p> </td> <td data-bbox="762 1592 1469 1653"> <p>What are the constraints regarding the cleaning of septic tanks?</p> </td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="513 1682 762 1742"> <p><i>Summarize responses</i></p> </td> <td data-bbox="762 1682 1469 1872"> <p>Local operators find it too expensive for their revenue. Municipal services operate on demand and have insufficient response capacity. Old houses do not have septic tank at all. The occupation of the Camping Site during summer is the major cause.</p> </td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="513 1901 762 1962"> <p><i>Generalize Overall Viewpoint</i></p> </td> <td data-bbox="762 1901 1469 1962"> <p>It is the owners' responsibility. Raising awareness should be increased. The problem requires an integrated solution (waste water treatment system).</p> </td> </tr> </table>	<p>Topic 1</p>	<p>Contamination of the Lagoon by urban waste water; the system is based on septic tanks that are not reliable, particularly in the summer when residential/tourism occupation has a peak and climate conditions are not favourable (high temperatures, no precipitation, low water volume in the Lagoon).</p>	<p><i>1. Question asked during focus group</i></p>	<p>What are the constraints regarding the cleaning of septic tanks?</p>	<p><i>Summarize responses</i></p>	<p>Local operators find it too expensive for their revenue. Municipal services operate on demand and have insufficient response capacity. Old houses do not have septic tank at all. The occupation of the Camping Site during summer is the major cause.</p>	<p><i>Generalize Overall Viewpoint</i></p>	<p>It is the owners' responsibility. Raising awareness should be increased. The problem requires an integrated solution (waste water treatment system).</p>
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		<p>2. Question asked during focus group Do you think the construction of a waste water network connected to a treatment plant is the only solution?</p> <p>Summarize responses Yes (100%) The Camping Site expressed his will to work on this with the Municipal Services. Previous attempts were unsuccessful. The Municipal Services blame the Camping Site for lack of cooperation. Local operators consider it is the Municipality responsibility to solve the problem.</p> <p>Generalize Overall Viewpoint This is the solution to adopt. The Municipal Services area working on it with the Water Authorities. Major constraints are the lack of financial resources (relatively to other regional priorities), the location of the treatment plant and the cooperation of the Camping Site.</p>
<p>Topic 2 Reducing environmental impacts of rice farming and increasing the farmers revenue.</p>		<p>1. Question asked during focus group Is it possible to convert to organic production?</p> <p>Summarize responses Nature conservation organisations defend this solution. Farmers have doubts on the profitability of organic production. To envisage such change they need to be sure about financial incentives. Farmers agree on an experimental project, provided the location doesn't affect their current production and there is financial support.</p> <p>Generalize Overall Viewpoint Conversion to organic production is not a feasible possibility. Development of an experimental project depends on the farmers' capacity to grab funding opportunities. There is not much enthusiasm.</p> <p>2. Question asked during focus group Should a local rice brand be created?</p> <p>Summarize responses Yes (100%) Needs the institutional support of the Municipal Council. Market access is the major constraint. Should be integrated with tourism for the promotion of all local products.</p> <p>Generalize Overall Viewpoint It is an objective shared by all farmers. Work must be done regarding how to implement it and how to gather all interest parties in one promotional structure with municipal support.</p> <p>3. Question asked during focus group How do you envisage further cooperation between agriculture and tourism?</p> <p>Summarize responses In general, both farmers and tourism operators agree; some activities such as birdwatching already benefit from this cooperation; particular actions need further assessment. The Local Administration is open to assume a proactive role.</p>

		<p><i>Generalize Overall Viewpoint</i> It is a positive measure that could benefit all, but needs to be promoted on the basis of concrete actions to be defined. The creation of a collective structure for the joint promotion of local rice and tourism could help.</p> <p>Topic 3 Tourism promotion: local tourism suffers from low quality of infrastructure, dispersion of operators and lack of international marketing.</p> <p><i>1. Question asked during focus group</i> What kind of investment is needed to attract more visitors? What do you think about the creation of an Interpretation Centre?</p> <p><i>Summarize responses</i> The Municipal Council plans to invest more on infrastructure for nature tourism and outdoor activities. Local operators claim services and animation activities should operate all year round, particularly restaurants and activities in the Lagoon. Tourism operators claim administrative restrictions and red tape are the major constraints to tourism development. Stakeholders are unanimous about the advantages of an Interpretation Centre including both environment and cultural aspects.</p> <p><i>Generalize Overall Viewpoint</i> There is a strong problem of seasonality that needs to be combated with year round activities such as birdwatching. Public investment in infrastructure is needed but the Municipal council is working on this. The Interpretation Centre has to be promoted by a local collective structure.</p> <p><i>2. Question asked during focus group</i> How do you feel about having a Quality Chart for Tourism Operators?</p> <p><i>Summarize responses</i> In general, all tourism operators agree. Restaurants should be included. Restaurants are considered of poor quality by the local accommodation operators.</p> <p><i>Generalize Overall Viewpoint</i> Although nobody disagrees, this idea did not get much attention. It clearly needs a leading organisation to make a detailed proposal for the operators to discuss.</p> <p><i>3. Question asked during focus group</i> How do you envisage the integration with other activities and regions?</p> <p><i>Summarize responses</i> In general, everybody agrees. Several examples and opportunities were mentioned.</p> <p><i>Generalize Overall Viewpoint</i> This is another intervention that requires a lead organisation, preferably raised from the association of local operators and with institutional support of the Municipal Council and the Regional Tourism Authority.</p> <p>Topic 4 Legalisation of fishing in the Lagoon</p> <p><i>1. Question asked</i> What kind of fishing could be permitted?</p>
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		<p>during focus group</p> <p><i>Summarize responses</i> Local residents and fishermen claim the legalisation of professional fishing as it was a traditional activity that was prohibited by the Hydrographic Basin Management Plan. Local fishermen had to move their activity to the nearby Santo Andre Lagoon, out of the municipal territory. Scientifically, fishing could help agitate the water mass and combat water stratification. The Nature Conservation Authority claims that the main species targeted by the fishermen is eel (<i>Anguilla anguilla</i>), which is a critically endangered species (IUNC 2108 – Red List). The Nature Conservation Authority proposes the creation of a concession for recreational fishing only.</p> <p><i>Generalize Overall Viewpoint</i> This is one of the most controversial issues, as the local population doesn't understand why fishing is legal in the nearby Santo André Lagoon and forbidden in Melides. Given the position of the Nature Conservation Authority, professional fishing will never be an option.</p> <p>Topic 5 Improving the Lagoon ecological status; several solutions to counteract negative ecological processes were discussed.</p> <p><i>1. Question asked during focus group</i> Do you agree with a solution to filter the running waters prior to its entrance in the Lagoon (e.g. green filters, soil filters)?</p> <p><i>Summarize responses</i> Yes (90%) Maybe (10%, corresponding to the respondents that were not qualified to have an opinion). Preparatory studies are needed.</p> <p><i>Generalize Overall Viewpoint</i> There is general acceptance of such a solution. Qualified entities should develop further studies to choose the best solution.</p> <p><i>2. Question asked during focus group</i> Do you think that dredging the Lagoon bottom could help?</p> <p><i>Summarize responses</i> Maybe (80%, corresponding to the respondents that are more conscious of negative effects and those that are not qualified to have an opinion) No (20%)</p> <p><i>Generalize Overall Viewpoint</i> This intervention raises many doubts about possible indirect effects and on the real benefits.</p> <p><i>3. Question asked during focus group</i> Do you agree with the intervention planned by the Municipal Council for the Melides river and how do you see similar interventions in other water streams?</p> <p><i>Summarize responses</i> Yes (100%) to the planned intervention in the Melides River. Any other interventions should take into account the ownership of the land.</p> <p><i>Generalize Overall</i> The Melides intervention has no objections. Some doubts are</p>
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		<p><i>Viewpoint</i> related to the actual financial capacity of the Municipal Council to accomplish it.</p> <p>4. Question asked during focus group What is your opinion on the implementation of an artificial fountain to shake the water in the Lagoon to combat eutrophication?</p> <p><i>Summarize responses</i> Maybe (82%) No (15%) Yes (3%)</p> <p><i>Generalize Overall Viewpoint</i> The major objection is that it is not natural, affecting the natural scenery.</p> <p>5. Question asked during focus group What do you think about the breaching of the Lagoon to allow for the entrance of ocean water?</p> <p><i>Summarize responses</i> It is necessary to renovate nutrients. It helps cleaning the Lagoon. It should be done more often during the year, particularly in the summer.</p> <p><i>Generalize Overall Viewpoint</i> This event is seen by most stakeholders as a cultural/traditional event rather than part of an ecological process that has to be controlled.</p> <p>6. Question asked during focus group Is it possible to make surface water runoffs circulate through the rice fields for sediment deposition prior to reaching the Lagoon?</p> <p><i>Summarize responses</i> The farmers are consensual about the benefits of this measure for the agriculture and to reduce sedimentation in the Lagoon.</p> <p><i>Generalize Overall Viewpoint</i> This is a measure that requires coordination of farmers.</p> <p>Topic 6: Governance issues</p> <p>1. Question asked during focus group Some of the interventions discussed earlier assume some kind of association of the operators. How do you envisage an association of the local rice farmers and an association of the tourism operators?</p> <p><i>Summarize responses</i> Rice farmers are already in regional/national associations and have little time to spare in associative work; however an association to promote a local brand would be good. Tourism operators agree with the need to join efforts but Local Authorities should act as drivers.</p> <p><i>Generalize Overall Viewpoint</i> One-only association integrating all economic activities and the municipal authorities would be the preferred solution, oriented to the promotion of all local products. Individual operators seem to lack the initiative to promote integrated or collective solutions.</p> <p>2. Question asked during focus group Do you think that a local committee to monitor the evolution of the wetland and to supervise the execution of the action</p>
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		<p>plan would be useful?</p> <p><i>Summarize responses</i> Yes (59%) Maybe (41%) The Municipal Services and the Local Administration should be part.</p> <p><i>Generalize Overall Viewpoint</i> This issue is not consensual. Public authorities that are in charge of monitoring the environment have doubts about local supervision. The Municipal Council is considered the ultimate entity responsible for local development.</p>
	<p>IV. Conclusion</p>	<p>This section contains the conclusions of the process and explains what has been learned from the focus groups. Finally the motivations that lead to the choice of the final scenarios are summarized and defended.</p> <p>The approach adopted allowed for a highly participative process, as the focus groups were complemented with an intense programme of local interviews. These interviews were very important to understand the position of the specific interest groups, their specific arguments and the relationships amongst them. The oriented scenario was made of the suggestions of all stakeholders and the discussion in the focus group was facilitated because information had been previously shared.</p> <p>Hence, it is not surprising that a fair consensus was obtained in most of the proposed measures. However, the focus groups presented the opportunity to make public the position of each group or entity.</p> <p>More than a mere quantitative analysis, it was the assessment of the arguments presented by the different stakeholders that helped to accept, eliminate or adjust interventions to pass to the preferred scenario. This assessment had a strong scientific component, for which qualified experts were consulted.</p> <p>The preferred scenario will now be converted into an action plan, composed of intervention measures and recommendations. The action plan will again be presented for debate and approval by the stakeholders in the next General Assembly of Stakeholders.</p>

C. APPENDICES

<p>C. APPENDICES</p>	<p>Appendix 1 – Participative Process Appendix 2 – Focus Groups Participation Lists Appendix 3 – Focus Groups Photo Gallery Appendix 4 - Communication materials</p>
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